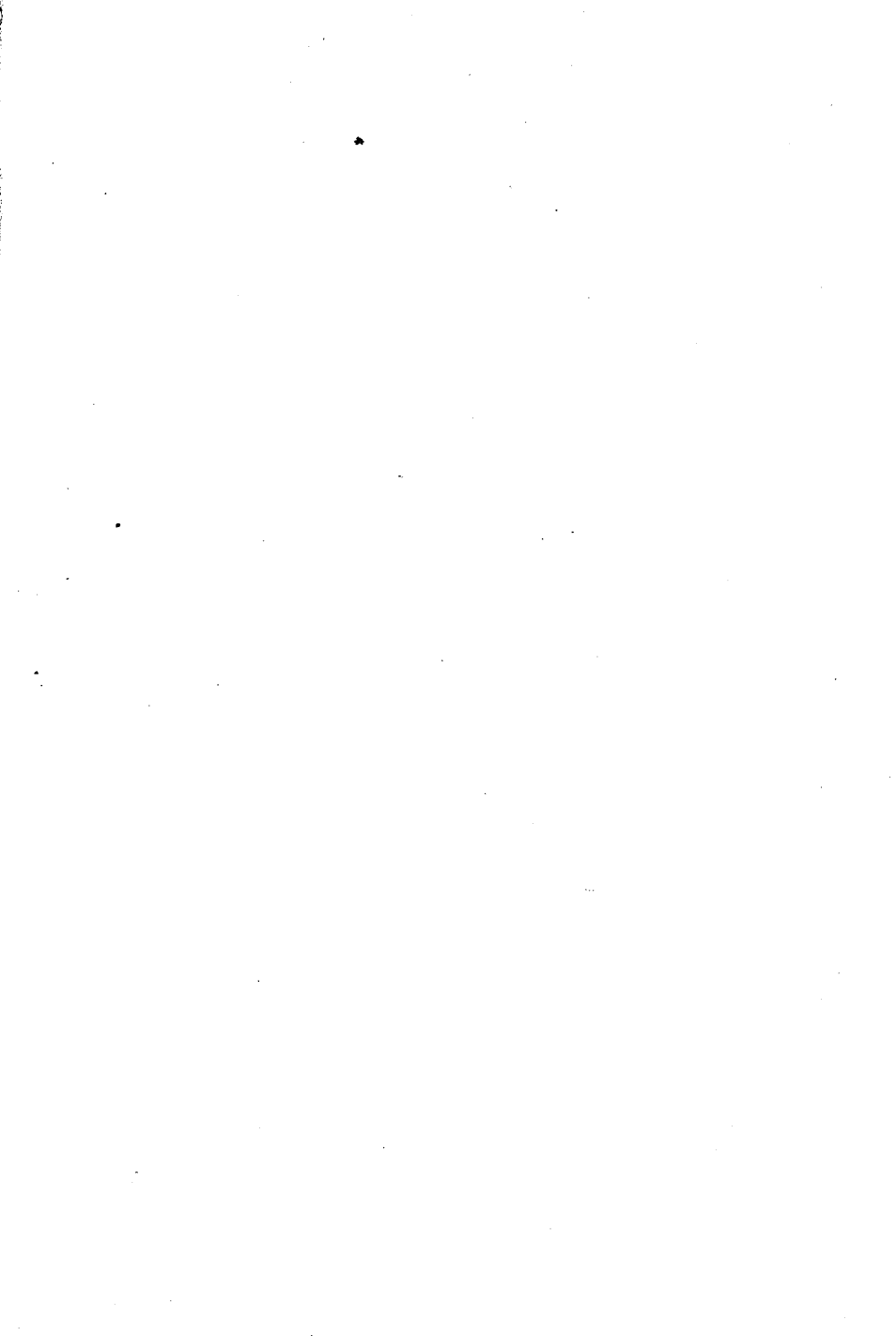


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IRISH METHODISM IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

IRISH METHODISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A SYMPOSIUM

THE IRISH METHODIST PUBLISHING CO.

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PREFACE

ONLY a few words are needed to indicate the aim of this volume. Since the late Rev. C. H. Crookshank, M.A., laid down his pen after bringing the story of Irish Methodism up to the year 1859, nothing has been done to preserve the annals of our Church. A considerable quantity of matter lies somewhere accumulated covering the period 1859 to 1900. We hope those who are its trustees will soon make it available to the people of Methodism.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century changes have swept all nations and all denominations. Irish Methodism has not escaped. The century opened with the Twentieth Century Fund, and by the end of the third decade "The Methodist Church in Ireland Act" had set our Church on an autonomous basis, and registered an epoch in our history.

It is within these two points that the following chapters mainly lie. We say mainly, because it has been quite impossible to interpret certain movements in the twentieth century without tracing them to their roots in earlier history. This has been particularly so in Chapters VI. and VIII. No adequate record of recent enterprise in World Evangelisation could be made without showing how it arose out of conditions in the last century. Similarly in the chapter, "Irish Methodism and Education," the part played by earlier Methodism as a pioneer in Education seemed too remarkable to be omitted. We are glad, therefore, to print the records by Rev. J. E. Neill, B.A., and Rev. R. Lee Cole, M.A., B.D., as they stand.

The Editor wishes he could adequately express his gratitude to all the contributors for their courtesy and readiness to co-operate and their indulgence in alterations and excisions. The book is the outcome of "over-time" labour and this must be the ground of apology for all its defects. A special word of gratitude is due to Rev. Dr. Northridge, M.A., for his unstinted help in this as in all matters that concern the Kingdom of God, to Mr. J. R. A. Booth, B.A., for preparing the Index, and to Messrs. Dorman & Co., the printers, whose courtesy and helpfulness greatly aided in publication of the book.

Chapter III. recalls "black week," January, 1931. Where the asterisks appear in the chapter, there the Rev. J. C. Robertson, M.A., B.D., laid down his pen to take it up on earth no more. His notes for the remaining part of the chapter were discovered and Dr. Northridge added the concluding paragraphs according to the tenor of the notes and of Mr. Robertson's conversations on Theology. To Mr. Robertson's memory the volume is affectionately dedicated, with the prayer that our little Church in Ireland may raise up many like him who shall blend scholarship with saintliness.

ALEXANDER McCREA.

EDGEHILL COLLEGE,
BELFAST,
June 1931.

To
the Memory of
REV. JOHN CHARLES ROBERTSON, M.A., B.D.
WHOSE SCHOLARSHIP WAS ONLY MATCHED BY
HIS CHRISTLIKE HUMILITY, THIS
VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

I

IRISH METHODISM AND POLITICAL CHANGES.

REV. JAMES M. ALLEY.

ON the sixth of December, 1921, an epoch-making document was signed in London. Ratified as it was shortly afterwards by the Parliament of Great Britain, that document brought to an end, after seven hundred and fifty years, British authority in Ireland, and, for weal or for woe, put the reins of government in Irish hands.

That document, known as "The Irish Treaty," was signed on behalf of the British Coalition Government by the Prime Minister, Mr. D. Lloyd George; the Lord Chancellor, Lord Birkenhead; the Leader of the House of Commons, Mr. Austin Chamberlain; and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Winston Churchill; and on behalf of Ireland, by the five duly appointed delegates of Sinn Fein, viz.: Messrs. Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, George Gavin Duffy (Barrister), Robert Barton (Landowner), and E. J. Duggan (Solicitor).

Its first clause declared:

"Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the 'Community of Nations known as the British Empire, as the 'Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the 'Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, 'with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace, 'order and good government of Ireland, and an Executive 'responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and 'known as the 'Irish Free State'."

A further clause in this historic document laid it down that the Members of Parliament of the Free State,—a House of Commons and a Senate—should take an oath "of allegiance to the Constitution of the Free State as by law established," and also to be faithful to the King, "in virtue of the common

citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain, and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations." It was also determined that a Governor-General should be appointed as the representative of the Crown in Ireland, and that Ireland was to have her own army for the defence of her shores.

NORTHERN IRELAND'S MOMENTOUS CHOICE

The Treaty thus signed, was a few days later duly ratified by the British Parliament, 401 members of the House of Commons voting in its favour and 58 against; while in the House of Lords there were 166 for, and 47 against. In it, Ireland as a whole was recognised as forming the Irish Free State. One of its clauses, however, laid down that after the Act embodying the Treaty had become law the Parliament of Northern Ireland, established only a few months before by the Act of 1920, should have the right, upon presenting an address, to have the six counties of North-East Ulster excluded from the Free State. In that case the six county area would retain its position under the Act of 1920, with its own local Parliament and its representatives at Westminster. If, however, Northern Ireland decided not to sever itself from the Irish Free State, it would still retain its own Parliament, but such powers over Northern Ireland as had been retained to the Imperial Parliament, would pass to the Parliament meeting in Dublin.

Northern Ireland, as everyone knows, made its momentous choice, and elected to remain outside the Irish Free State. The six-county area has its own Parliament, consisting of a House of Commons and a Senate; its own Executive Government, and a Governor representing the Crown. In all matters save a few which are reserved for the Imperial Parliament, Northern Ireland has thus absolute power over its own affairs, whilst in all the rest of Ireland the writ of the Parliament at Westminster has ceased to run.

A VIOLENT REVOLUTION

Political changes in Ireland have rarely come along the peaceful lines of evolution. They have for the most part

resulted from agitation, often fierce, and frequently sanguinary. The changes inaugurated by the Treaty of 1921 are the outcome of a violent revolution, the pathway which led to them being one of the darkest and saddest in Ireland's tragic history. Whatever of permanent value may be in the changes now secured has been purchased at a cost of suffering to Ireland greater perhaps than she has ever known before.

CAUSES OF IRISH DISAFFECTION

Trevelyan in his *History of England* records how, after the revolution of 1688, it seemed as if Scotland would, on the death of Queen Anne, break away from its partnership with England, making one of the exiled Stuarts her King, instead of turning to the House of Hanover as England meant to do. He points out how different the world would be to-day if for the last two hundred years Scottish talents and energies had been employed against England, instead of being employed, as they have been, in partnership with England, and eulogises the statesmanship by which that calamity was happily prevented.

If with like insight and statesmanship Ireland's disaffection had been dealt with in its early days, many dark and painful chapters in the history of both Great Britain and Ireland would never have been written. Wesley was quick to see how sadly things had been mismanaged in the relationship between the two countries. On August 15, 1747, during his first brief visit to Ireland, he wrote in his Journal, "Is it any wonder that those who are born Papists generally live and die such, when the Protestants can find no better ways of converting them than by penal laws and Acts of Parliament."

Cromwell's sternly, often brutally, repressive measures after his conquest of the country; his completion of the work begun by the Tudors, of taking the land in Ireland from the chieftains who owned it and giving it to English proprietors; penal laws of great severity; the suppression of the Irish language; the deliberate ruin of the Irish cloth trade in the interests of English manufacturers; the forbidding of the import of Irish cattle into England at the behest of English

agriculturists, combined to sow in the hearts of the majority of the Irish people that seemingly unreasoning hatred of England, which has so often been a puzzle to Englishmen in later days, and which has persisted in spite of the generous efforts of British statesmen in the last half-century to wipe out the bitter memories of the past, to conciliate the Irish people, and to secure Ireland's prosperity. British rulers in bygone centuries sowed the wind, their successors in recent days reaped the whirlwind.

IRELAND'S PERSISTENT DEMAND

When Ireland's second Home Rule Bill was, in 1895, thrown out by the House of Lords, a decision which was confirmed by the British electorate in the General Election which immediately followed, it seemed to many people that Home Rule was dead. The Unionist Party, which returned to power, set itself to make assurance doubly sure by the policy of "killing Home Rule by kindness." Land Purchase schemes, which involved considerable cost to the British tax-payer, were carried through, the landlord interest being bought out and the tenant farmers made owners of their farms. Irishmen of all creeds and classes were by means of the popularly-elected County Councils and Urban District Councils, and through other important Boards, given a place in the government of the country, such as Irishmen had not known for centuries. This policy unquestionably did not a little to train Irishmen for the responsibility that is theirs to-day, but it did not destroy, or even lessen the intensity of, the demand for self-government. During the dark years of the "War of Independence," as it was called, how often one saw painted in huge letters across some public building, "Damn your concessions. Give us back our country."

In 1912, when the third Home Rule Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by the Asquith Government, a new condition of things had come into being. The absolute veto of the House of Lords on legislation had been abolished by the Parliament Act carried in 1911, after a General Election, and a threat to the Lords that their opposition to it, if persisted in, would be overcome by the creation of a crowd

of new Peers. Under this Act, a Bill which the House of Lords refused to pass, would, if carried through the Commons in three successive sessions, receive the Royal Assent, and so become law.

ULSTER'S RESISTANCE

Realizing the vast difference which the Parliament Act made in their position, the Unionists of Ulster set themselves to resist Home Rule at all costs. Over half-a-million men and women signed the Ulster Covenant, which declared:

"We pledge ourselves to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland."

Ulster Volunteers were enrolled on military lines—infantry, cavalry and artillery—and were soon 100,000 strong. They were openly drilled and many of them were armed. The Ulster Unionist Council organised itself as a Provisional Government, with Sir Edward Carson, M.P., a distinguished lawyer, at its head. Funds to the amount of a million pounds sterling were raised. In all these actions Ulster Unionists had the approval and active support of the Unionist Party of Great Britain, Mr. Bonar Law, the leader of that great Party, declaring: "I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go in which I will not be ready to support them."

The inevitable happened. The formation of the Ulster Volunteers was followed by the enrolment of Nationalist Volunteers, the avowed object being "to give Mr. Redmond a weapon which will enable him to enforce the demand for Home Rule." At first the leaders of the Nationalist Party held aloof from the new movement, but when they threw themselves into it Volunteers were enrolled at the rate of 15,000 per week, and soon Ulster's total was passed. Whatever forebodings the British Government may have had concerning the existence of two rival bodies of Volunteers in Ireland, it could scarcely interfere in the South of Ireland with a movement ostensibly promoted to further its policy

of Home Rule for Ireland, when it had not interfered with a like movement in Ulster whose object was to defeat that policy.

Such was the situation in Ireland when in 1914 for the third time the Home Rule Bill was carried in the House of Commons. The House of Lords could no longer prevent its passing. Under the provisions of the Parliament Act, it now went to the King for his signature. As a constitutional monarch he could not refuse to sign it, and once his signature was attached to the Bill it became the law of the land. Feeling ran so high in Ireland on both sides that it seemed as if civil war were inevitable. The Government in its perplexity earnestly sought for some way of compromise, but its efforts failed. Then the King, George V., took the unprecedented course of inviting the Nationalist and Unionist Leaders to meet at a Conference in Buckingham Palace to settle between them their differences. After four days that conference, over which the Speaker of the House of Commons presided, failed, and things looked darker than ever.

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Then came the bolt from the blue, Germany's wild spring at the throat of Europe. In the light of the World War the issues at stake in Ireland in the minds of most Englishmen faded into comparative insignificance. Domestic strife ceased. A compromise was come to regarding the Home Rule Bill. It was placed upon the Statute Book, but its operation was deferred till a year after the close of the war. A Coalition Government was formed, Sir Edward Carson, the great Ulster Leader, occupying an important place in it. A portfolio was offered to Mr. John Redmond, but for various reasons it was declined by him. On the advice of Redmond and Carson—united at last—two Army Divisions were formed out of the rival bodies of Volunteers in Ireland. Side by side the Ulster Volunteers and the Nationalist Volunteers held the line together for months just south of Ypres. Side by side they advanced together in one of the fiercest attacks on the German position. It seemed as if Union had come at last,

and that at the close of the World War the way to a satisfactory and peaceful settlement of Ireland's difficulties would be found.

IRELAND'S EVIL GENIUS

It was not to be. The evil genius which so often has played havoc with Ireland's prospects once more in Puck-like fashion had its disastrous way. Ever there has been in Ireland a band of extremists, small but determined, whose last wish was peace with England. To them England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. To most people the holding up of Home Rule until a year after the war was ended seemed a reasonable way out of an impasse. Sinn Feiners denounced it as a mere trick, an act of treachery, the precursor to its abandonment. At a great meeting held in O'Connell Street, Dublin, in support of the Home Rule Bill, a meeting that filled that noble street from end to end, Patrick Pearse, who more than any one was responsible for the Easter Rising of 1916, had declared: "If we are cheated once more, there will be red war in Ireland." He and thousands of others taking the view that they had been cheated, decided for "red war." Lord Kitchener, himself a distinguished Irishman, who had charge of the War Office, unwittingly played into the hands of the extremists by his manifest mistrust of the Southern people, and his slowness to accept Mr. Redmond's offer of co-operation. So engrossed was everyone, outside the circle of plotters in Ireland, with the Great War, that little attention was paid by anyone to the activities of that section of the Nationalist Volunteers which had not offered for service in the British Army. When on the morning of Easter Monday, 1916, they seized a number of public buildings in Dublin, ran up the tricolour, green, white and yellow, and proclaimed "The Irish Republic," "it would be difficult to determine," as someone has said, "which was the more taken aback by their action—the Government that was to be overthrown, or the people that was to be made free."

Public opinion in Ireland was at first incensed against the rebels. Sir John Maxwell, who was appointed Military Governor, reported to the British Government: "I am glad to be able to record my opinion that the feelings of the bulk of the citizens of Dublin being against the Sinn Feiners materially influenced the collapse of the rebellion." Soon, however, a reaction of popular feeling set in. That reaction was unquestionably caused by the execution of the leaders of the revolt, and a number of others, after trial by court-martial. It is difficult to believe, as a Sinn Fein historian himself admits, that any country in the world in like circumstances, "stabbed in the back as England believed herself to be, in an hour of imminent peril, would have so risen to the heights of magnanimity as to have spared the lives of the leaders of the rebellion." Yet their execution gave to the cause for which they died, in the eyes of the majority of the Irish race, the consecration of martyrdom. Almost more disastrous in its effects was the placing of the greater number of the 3,000 who were arrested on suspicion of being connected with the rebellion, in a great concentration camp at Fron-Goch in Wales. That camp became a veritable academy of Sinn Feinism and of the physical force party. A large number of those who inspired and led what they called the "War of Independence" graduated at that concentration camp.

IN DARKEST IRELAND

The years which followed are as a night-mare to those who passed through their horrors. With the exception of the Unionist members, and of the eight survivors of the once all-powerful Nationalist Party, all the Irish Members of Parliament met in Dublin, instead of obeying the summons to Westminster, and constituted themselves into an Irish Parliament—*Dail Eireann*. Its relationship to England was declared to be that of the Belgian Government to the German Army of Occupation in Belgium. The decrees of *Dail Eireann*, by some grudgingly, and by others whole-heartedly, were accepted by the people as the law of the land. Sinn Fein Courts were established, and it was at the peril of one's life

that resort was made to what was called an "English" Court. A sort of guerilla warfare was waged with ever-increasing violence. Policemen and British soldiers were shot almost at sight. Raids for arms became an everyday occurrence. Anyone suspected of giving information to the British military or police authorities was shot without even the chance of proving himself innocent being given him. Those who refused to subscribe to the funds of the Republican organisations—and most Protestants on conscientious grounds did so refuse—had their cattle or their goods seized, with no redress in law. Bands of Republican soldiers, as they were called, roamed the country, often quartering themselves for days together in the best houses available, and claiming to be fed on the fat of the land. The worst period of the fight was that in which the British Government sought to defeat the Republican movement with its own weapons, the days of the "Black-and-Tans" and of the Auxiliaries. Reprisal followed reprisal, ambush on the top of ambush. In the first three months of 1921 over 500 persons were killed, of whom about one-third belonged to the forces of the Crown.

A DOOR OF HOPE

On the 28th June, 1921, the Parliament of Northern Ireland, established by the Act of 1920, was formally opened by the King. In his speech, His Majesty made an earnest appeal for the reconciliation of all parties in Ireland. Out of that memorable appeal came the movement which led to the signing of the Treaty of December 21st, 1921, the Treaty which established the Free State and yet gave to Northern Ireland the power, if she so willed it, to continue its close association with the British Parliament.

Had that appeal not been issued, it is almost certain that Sinn Féinism would have been, at least for the time being, crushed. Michael Collins himself has made it plain that the movement as a military one was at the point of exhaustion, when the truce was called. A continuance of the pressure which the forces of the Crown were exerting would have meant the collapse of Republican resistance. What then? The old dreary round which led to no ultimate goal, would

have begun once more. Surely King George was right. Whatever the risks involved, it were better that a new road should be tried which might perchance lead to goodwill and the co-operation of all Ireland's sons and daughters for the common good.

THE POSITION OF IRISH METHODISTS

Traditionally, and by conviction, Irish Methodists through all those long years of struggle, stood in overwhelming numbers for the continuance of the legislative union with Britain. It is safe to say that not two per cent. of the Methodists of Ireland desired Home Rule. They had lived under British rule from birth and had no complaint to make against it. Home Rule, most of them honestly believed, meant Rome Rule, and staunch Protestants as they were, this they were prepared to resist to the death. As the fight grew fiercer there grew amongst some of the younger Ministers and Members of the Church the conviction that, whatever their personal predilections might be, it was not possible to continue to meet the persistent demand of Southern Ireland for self-determination and self-government with a policy of blank resistance. To many of the older men such an attitude seemed one of weakness, a betrayal of all that was most precious. For a time it seemed as if the Church might be rent asunder, but the brotherhood of Methodism stood the strain of sharply-divided political opinion. Irish Methodism was never more united than she is to-day, realising that her great task is "to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the land."

During the dark and difficult years which led up to the signing of the Treaty, and indeed till the Free State had asserted its power over the recalcitrant and rebellious Republicans, Irish Methodists—at any rate those who lived in what is now the Free State—had to pass through the fire. Some of them who, on conscientious grounds, felt compelled to inform the British authorities of things that were being done in their district, were foully murdered. It made it no easier for their relatives that those responsible for the deed of crime called it an execution! Some were entrapped into

giving information to members of the Republican forces, who came wearing the uniform of British military officers, and then were shot for their simplicity, and their homes burned. Not a few were compelled to fly the country in order to save their lives. Others had their property destroyed, and some, growing hopeless of settled conditions in their lifetime, sought in Northern Ireland, in England, or in lands beyond the seas, a happier home. For the most part, however, with indomitable courage, and a faith that refused to despair, Irish Methodists, in common with their co-religionists of other denominations, held their ground, carrying on their business as best they could, convinced that Ireland in those dark and trying days needed, as never before, the evangelical witness. Talk of heroism! Could there be greater heroism than was shown by these people? A false step, however innocently taken, a concocted story by someone who hoped to profit by their removal, might mean the meeting of a secret, and perhaps self-constituted, court, the condemnation of one or more members of a family to death, and the carrying out of the sentence without reason assigned or any opportunity of proving one's innocence. Yet night after night thousands of our people, facing such dangers, said with the Psalmist, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety." As their forefathers had often done in the early days of Methodism in Ireland, after some murderous attack upon them, so might the Methodists of these latter days have gathered to sing one of those triumphant odes that lie almost unused in our Hymn Book to-day:

Worship, and thanks, and blessing,
And strength ascribe to Jesus!
 Jesus alone
 Defends His own,
While earth and hell oppress us.
We sing Thine arm unshortened,
Brought through our sore temptation;
 With heart and voice
 In Thee rejoice
The God of our salvation.

Innumerable illustrations might be given of the respect for, and confidence in, the Methodist people shown by their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen in those days of terror. Let one suffice. A farmer and a solicitor, who, like the majority of the people in the land, had stood aloof from participation in the militant methods of the extremists, had a dispute about a large sum of money, considerably over £1,000 sterling. It was as much as the lives of both of them were worth to appeal to any of the British Courts of Law to decide the matter; neither had confidence in the newly-established Republican Courts. Those were the days when banks were being constantly raided for money, and the farmer would not agree to put the sum in dispute on deposit in a bank. Eventually the two men brought the money to a Methodist merchant whom they knew, requesting him to keep it for them till they could come to an agreement on the matter concerning which they were at variance. Somewhat reluctantly the Methodist merchant accepted the responsibility, and turned to give in writing an acknowledgment of having received the money. "There is no need," they said, "we don't want a receipt; we know it is safe in your hands."

GAINS AND LOSSES

What is the position of Irish Methodism to-day, now that the country has so far settled down to the new order of things?

In Northern Ireland the changes are not very marked. Whilst during the disturbed years some Southern Methodists migrated Northwards, any numerical gain from that source has been largely nullified by the continued stream of emigration, a stream swollen considerably on account of the long-drawn-out depression in Ulster's staple industries, shipbuilding and the linen trade. Yet it is noteworthy that in the fifteen years between the last Census made by the British Government, and that taken in 1926, the first Census under the new regime, the Methodist Church alone amongst all the Churches of Northern Ireland shows an increase. Roman Catholicism

showed a decrease of 9,733; the Church of Ireland of 7,078; the Presbyterian Church of 1,665. The Methodist Church in the same area increased during that period by 3,612. The increases were confined to Belfast city and the counties of Antrim and Down. Decreases were recorded in each of the other counties, varying from 43 in Co. Derry to 365 in Co. Fermanagh.

In common with their fellow-citizens of all denominations, Methodists in Northern Ireland have greatly benefited through the progressive and enlightened policy which Lord Craigavon's Government has pursued in matters affecting Education and the improvement of the Social condition of the people. The members of the Government have in many ways shown their recognition of the work the Methodist Church is doing, and their desire to help it in every legitimate way. Methodism in Northern Ireland is a much smaller Church than either the Church of Ireland or the Presbyterian Church. Yet a Methodist is, conjointly with a representative from each of these two great Churches, Chaplain to the Northern Parliament. On all public Boards, too, Methodism is given its full share of representation.

THE FREE STATE

In the area now known as the Free State, which embraces not only the Provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, but also three counties of Ulster, viz.: Monaghan, Cavan, and Donegal, there has been, consequent on the new order of things, an appalling decrease of Protestantism. The last census under the old regime was taken in 1911, the first under the new in 1926. In the fifteen years the number of Protestants had declined in the twenty-six counties by practically one-third, from 323,374 in 1911 to 217,037 in 1926. In that decline the Methodist Church shared to the full. This decrease is all the more to be deplored in view of the fact that Ireland in her re-making needs much that Protestantism can supply. Paradoxical though it may seem, Ireland was never so ready to listen to the message which the Churches that have got back to the simplicity of the Gospel can give her.

That Home Rule would mean Rome Rule was one of the cardinal beliefs of most Protestants in Ireland. It was that belief which lay behind much of their strenuous opposition to the demand of the majority of the people for self-government. Whatever the future may reveal, the granting of self-government to Southern Ireland has not so far added to the power of the Roman Catholic priest: rather it has distinctly lessened his power. The Cromwellian land settlement, as Trevelyan points out, "by sweeping away the class of native gentry and leaving the persecuted priests as the only leaders of the people, rendered the Irish the most priest-led people in Europe." The long drawn-out struggle with the British forces brought other leaders into prominence; the uncertain and changing attitude of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and priests on great moral issues gave many of their people furiously to think. There is a spirit of tolerance abroad in the land to-day which few a decade ago hoped to live to see. In the Free State to-day it is now generally felt that not only has a man a right to his convictions, but that he has a perfect right to give expression to those convictions so long as he does it without causing needless offence to his neighbours. It is because of this remarkable change that the Gospel of the Grace of God is freely preached in the open air by Methodist ministers every Fair Day in upwards of sixty towns of the Irish Free State, and that the colporteurs of our Church are selling every year some 45,000 copies of the Word of God, chiefly the New Testament in the Douay Version, the version recognised by the Church of Rome, and in addition are selling annually over 20,000 copies of other helpful religious literature. If it be true, as we know it is, "the entrance of Thy Word giveth light," there is certain to come a blessed harvest of light from this sowing of the imperishable seed of the Word of God.

NINE INEXPERIENCED YOUNG MEN

The late Mr. Kevin O'Higgins, whose untimely death at the hands of extremists was such a loss to Ireland, spoke in the Dail of the Government of the Free State as having come into the hands of "nine very young and rather

inexperienced young men." Sir Henry Robinson, one of the ablest of Ireland's long line of outstanding Civil Servants, in his "Memories, Wise and Otherwise," also comments on the extreme youth of the members of the new Ministry, and of their "pale and anxious look"; whilst at the same time he bears cordial testimony to their courtesy.

It was a herculean task to which these "nine very young and inexperienced young men" set their hands, but they have made good, and succeeded in the task they undertook far beyond the expectation even of the most sanguine. The efforts of the extremists to destroy the young State—their attitude being, "If we are not allowed to govern the country as we think right, no one will govern it"—were defeated, law and order was established, and there is probably no country in the world freer from serious crime to-day than this which has so recently emerged from chaos.

Mr. Cosgrave, the President of the Executive, who has been a tower of strength to the Free State, inspired general confidence by his outline of policy in his opening address to the Dail. It was good to hear that the Government held itself responsible "not to one section or one order of the community." The confidence thus created has steadily grown and has been strengthened by the number of old-time Unionists appointed to the Senate, and by the liberal proportion of high positions given to Protestants. The day of privilege for Protestants is, of course, gone for ever. No one in the Free State will receive a public appointment because he is a Protestant. But on the other hand there is no desire on the part of the Government to penalise a man for his Protestantism, and when that spirit has manifested itself among the most ignorant or bigoted of the people, it has been fearlessly and firmly dealt with, as in the matter of the appointment of a Protestant Librarian for Co. Mayo.

In *The Passing of the Gael*, the Irish peasant girl "with her heart of song and her frail reed of life, who died so young amongst the Mountains of Donegal," pictures some who had been driven forth from Ireland to make their living in lands beyond the seas. They had succeeded beyond their brightest dream, and were now both wealthy and great.

With eyes made sharp by approaching death, the singer sees that they are not really to be envied, and, addressing those who had remained in the old land, she says of those who had gone:

“The whip of hunger scourged them from the glens and quiet
moors,
But there’s a hunger of the heart that plenty never cures;
And they shall pine to walk again in the rough road that
is yours.”

All over the Free State men and women are realising that there’s a hunger of the heart which self-government cannot cure. Many of them are eagerly longing for something they have not yet got, which will satisfy that hunger. Irish Methodism, in common with all evangelical Churches, has got the bread of life, which alone satisfies the hunger of the heart. It is not content to eat its morsel alone. To the utmost of its ability, yea, and beyond its ability, it is seeking to bring the bread of life to the hungry and to lead the thirsty to the living Fountain of Waters. Its aim is not to win the people for Methodism, but for Christ. When the outlook is dark, as it not infrequently is, it tries the uplook. Thus with unflinching confidence that this “dear land of sorrows,” redeemed as it has been by the precious blood of Christ, will yet shine a glorious emerald in the crown of Immanuel, it gives itself hopefully to

“Build Jerusalem
In Ireland’s green and pleasant land.”

II

IRISH METHODISM AND RURAL WORK.

REV. W. H. MASSEY.

It is impossible to think of our rural work without recalling with admiration the horseback preachers of former years. They were men with a definite spiritual experience, and a positive message which they were eager to proclaim on every suitable occasion; and it may be truthfully affirmed that no more effective work than theirs was ever done by the Society of People called Methodists.

Circuits in those days were more extensive than at present, and in some cases the preacher required a full month, or more, to complete his "round" of preaching appointments. Mounting his horse on Monday morning he set out for his first "stopping place," where he was expected for dinner, and where only the best was considered good enough for the servant of God. He spent the afternoon visiting the families in the immediate neighbourhood, and at night preached in the home of his host to a mixed congregation that filled the kitchen or parlour, and frequently overflowed into the hall or other adjoining apartment. He had no pulpit save the back of a chair, placed as near as it could safely be to a blazing fire that radiated a super-abundance of warmth and good cheer.

Ecclesiastical dignity may have been lacking, yet there was something,—a quality, an atmosphere, an influence, a sense of fellowship and the presence of God,—about those simple, searching, intimate services in the rural homes of Methodism, almost impossible to reproduce in church or public hall. How prolific they were in spiritual results! What countless hosts—many happily still with us—can trace to them their first conscious response to the claims of Christ!

To those services the preacher gave of his best, and when the congregation dispersed he sat with the members of the family grouped about the fire for a social hour. Then closing the day with family worship he retired to the "prophet's chamber" for his night's rest. The next morning he proceeded to his second "stopping place," where his programme was more or less a repetition of the previous day; and so he continued, going each day from one stopping place to another, until the end of the month found him back again in the circuit town.

The nature of his work made it necessary that he should live with the people and share in the intimate fellowship of their family life. They gave him their confidence, and consulted him about their private affairs; in fact, his influence entered so profoundly into their lives that the impact of Methodism came to be not merely that of a message, but of the consecrated personality of the preacher on the members—especially the younger members—of the homes in which he stayed.

What rural Methodism owes to that true apostolic succession of consecrated personalities it would be difficult, if not impossible, to calculate. It was not confined to the preacher, but embraced also that devoted band of local preachers, class leaders, and other saintly men and women "who were considered to be the pillars of the Church." Indeed the success of our work in many areas was due in large measure to the spiritual influence of one outstanding Methodist family, or even one individual, who commanded the respect and confidence of the entire neighbourhood. Not a few stamped the impress of their character so deeply on the Methodism of their own locality, that to this day the mention of their circuit town recalls their names at once to remembrance. What true Methodist can think of Tullamore without recalling William Lumley, or Athlone without John Parsons, or Wexford without George Hadden, or Maryborough without John D. Rowe, or Roscrea without William Treanor and Thomas Dooly, to name but a few from a Roll

of Honour that is very long, and of which we are justly proud?

Our rural work has seldom, if ever, been spectacular, but its immeasurable results are remarkably widespread and important. Whether Philip Embury or Robert Strawbridge was the pioneer of Methodism to the American Continent may still be a debatable question, but both of them were undoubtedly the products of our rural work; and from their day to ours rural Methodism has been pouring the best of its young life, not only into our Church in other lands, but into our Irish cities and the ranks of our Irish Ministry.

The Minutes of our Irish Conference for the past fifty years contain the obituaries of 258 deceased ministers. Of these, 1 was born at sea, 2 in Cork, 8 in Belfast, 11 in Dublin, 8 came from England, 1 from Canada, and the overwhelming majority of the other 227 were born and reared in our rural areas. It is interesting to note that of the counties Fermanagh heads the list with 38 names, followed closely by Tyrone with 32, then Down 25, Cavan 21, Armagh and Cork 15 each, Antrim 13, Monaghan and Leitrim 8 each, Wicklow 7, and most of the other counties follow with smaller numbers. But the value of any county's contribution cannot be estimated by numbers alone. Wexford gave 5, but amongst them were Samuel Hollingsworth, William Crook, and William Nicholas. Sligo also gave 5, but they included William Graham Campbell, and Charles, James and Samuel Robertson. Limerick gave 3, but one was William Gorman. King's County gave only 2, but one of the two was Joseph William McKay.

The figures for our existing Ministry,—including all ministers, missionaries, and theological students, whose names appear in the Minutes of Conference for 1929,—reveal some interesting variations. The total number is 268, of which 1 was born in Australia, 1 in India, 1 in Jersey, 2 in Scotland, 20 in England, 4 in the city of Cork, 12 in Dublin, 49 in Belfast, and the great majority of the other 178 in our country districts. Of the total number, 39 are sons of the manse, of whom about 30 came from our country manses; and of the

49 born in Belfast, 20 were candidates since 1924. It is worthy of note that of the counties Fermanagh again heads the list with 29 names, Tyrone and Cork 20 each, Antrim and Down 15 each, Armagh 11, Monaghan 10, Cavan 8, Londonderry 7, Donegal 6, Queen's County 5, and seventeen other counties follow with lesser numbers. Unquestionably the chief recruiting ground for our Ministry has been in the rural areas of Ireland.

It is more difficult to obtain reliable figures to represent the rural contribution to our city congregations. In some reports actual numbers have been given, in others only approximate percentages, and these vary from 10 to 80 per cent. But it would appear that the average proportion of city circuit officials who came originally from the country is approximately 30 per cent., with about the same proportion of general members. If we include those whose parents came from the country, the percentage would, of course, be very much higher. These facts emphasize the importance of maintaining our rural work even where it requires considerable financial assistance. Indeed it could be argued that on the basis of finance alone our rural work yields a very profitable return in the regular contributions of those who are its direct products.

Before the beginning of this century several changes had already taken place which modified considerably the conditions of our rural work. Amongst these may be mentioned the multiplication of circuits by division and sub-division, with a consequent increase in the ministerial staff, but without a corresponding increase in total membership. According to the Minutes of the first Irish Conference, held in Limerick in 1752, there were then 10 preachers stationed in Ireland, and the whole country appears to have been divided into six circuits or rounds,—Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Athlone, Wexford and the North. No membership figures are given until the year 1767, when the total was stated to be 2,801. By the end of the century the number of circuits had increased to 35, with 85 ministers in active work, and a total membership

of 19,292; and by the end of last century the number of circuits had further increased to 133, with 206 ministers in active work, and a total membership of 27,745.

Put in tabular form the figures are as follows:—

Year.	Circuits.	Ministers.	Members.
1752	6	10	?
1767	9	18	2,801
1800	35	85	19,292
1900	133	206	27,745

In other words, during the nineteenth century, while the membership increased by 44 per cent., ministers increased by 142 per cent., and circuits by 280 per cent.

The obvious and beneficial result of the changes suggested by these figures was to make each circuit more compact, and therefore more easily and efficiently worked. On the other hand, the increased ministerial staff left less need for the local preacher, and the proximity of the circuit town less need for the minister to stay over-night in the homes of the people. This latter result was still further accentuated by the invention of the pneumatic tyre in 1889, and the rapidity with which the bicycle replaced the preacher's horse, and is to-day being replaced by the motor cycle and motor car. In the matter of personal convenience these changes have proved distinct gains for everybody concerned. But it is at least doubtful whether they have not been counterbalanced by the loss of that unique opportunity for cultivating those intimate personal comradeships between ministers and people, so fully enjoyed by the preachers of an earlier day.

The increase in the number of ministers and circuits naturally coincided with the erection of new chapels throughout the country; all of them monuments to the faith and generosity of our people, and most of them made necessary by the development of the work. In centres where the congregation had previously worshipped in the homely atmosphere of kitchen or parlour, gladly lent by the local Methodist family, it had to be transferred to the new chapel. To carry out this transfer without loss was not always an easy matter, for the personal influence of the family sometimes drew

people to the home who were not drawn in the same way to the new chapel. But in the great majority of cases the enthusiasm and hopefulness with which it was done was fully justified, for the new chapel met a real need, and marked the beginning of a period of fresh prosperity.

Another change that must be noted is the decline of the Class Meeting, followed by the gradual discontinuance of the Love Feast.

Towards the close of the century the Class Meeting showed serious symptoms of decline, due in part to the difficulty of maintaining a sufficient supply of suitable Leaders, and in part to the fact that it was gradually ceasing to fulfil its proper function as a means of spiritual fellowship. It developed along lines that changed its character almost entirely into that of a testimony meeting, and members instead of sharing their experience grew into the habit of repeating a well-worn form of words, which seldom varied from week to week; and as might have been expected, the younger generation of Methodists found little help or inspiration in these conventional and stereotyped phrases. Whatever the cause, Class Meeting has now almost wholly ceased in our rural areas. Several city and suburban circuits report existing Classes, but of our purely rural circuits only four can still do so.

One of the most serious consequences of the decline of the Class Meeting is the disappearance of the properly constituted Leaders' Meeting, together with that whole organisation of sub-pastors of which it was the dynamic centre. In a few circuits a form of Leaders' Meeting is still held, but in others so little is known of it that the Circuit Quarterly Meeting is incorrectly referred to as the Quarterly Leaders' Meeting or Leaders' Board.

The direct result of all this is an increasing divorcement of our leading laymen and women from participation in, and responsibility for, the spiritual side of our work, which is wholly regrettable, and constitutes one of our greatest and most pressing problems. Indeed the most urgent need of rural Methodism is such a revival of religion within our own membership as will restore our lost fellowship in some form

suitable to our modern requirements, and give us back our Leaders.

As to our present position in rural Ireland, it must be confessed that, apart from a small area in the neighbourhood of Belfast, the prevailing impression amongst our people is that rural Methodism, so far as it comes within their ken, is weaker to-day numerically, and perhaps spiritually, than in former years. The older folk profess to remember much larger congregations, and when in reminiscent mood speak of spiritual giants and old influential families which have passed away without leaving any direct successors.

Our fathers were conscious of a definite and all-important mission. They were convinced that "God's design, in raising up the Preachers called Methodists," was "to reform the nation. . . and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land." It was an immense programme, but they attacked it with adventurous aggressiveness and success, and felt themselves to be in the van of a great progressive movement.

To-day we are chiefly conscious of trying to hold our own, if not actually battling against a decline; this is specially true of the South and West.

But, it may be asked, is there any real ground for apprehension, or are our fears based on pure delusions? It is noteworthy that at the first Irish Conference held in Limerick in 1752, five years after the introduction of Methodism into Ireland, the first question dealt with was: "What is the cause of the general decay of the Societies in Ireland?" These words read strangely to us who look on those days as belonging to the period of Methodist adventure and triumph. Without doubt, pessimism is not the monopoly of our generation, nor of any age. But while this is true, it is not a very satisfying reply. Vague opinions can only be clarified by facing facts. Now, what are the facts?

In his inaugural address on "The Depopulation of Ireland," delivered in October 1929 to the College Historical Society in Trinity College, Dublin, the Auditor, Mr. C. B. McKenna, Sch., Mod., B.A., M.Sc., made the following statements: "With the exception of Scandinavia and parts of "Southern Spain, Ireland, which a century ago was the most

"densely populated country in Europe, is to-day the most "sparsely populated, while the recent Census figures indicate "that, with the exception of France, the Free State has the "highest known rate of decrease of population. . . . Even at "present, and for some years past, notwithstanding our yearly "decrease in population, the annual toll of emigrants is more "than 40,000. More than 85 per cent. leave Ireland between "the ages of 17 and 45, and more than 80 per cent. are drawn "from the rural districts. . . . Side by side with emigration "there is a growing tendency for the rural populace to "abandon the land, and migrate to the towns. Thus, in the "Free State, the rural districts since 1841 have lost over "two-thirds of their numbers."

These are serious facts, but do they apply equally to our Methodist people? An examination of our membership statistics for the period 1899-1929, discloses a steady drain by emigration from all parts of Ireland. Our total losses under this head amount to 14,102 for the period, or an annual average of 455. In actual figures the Belfast District comes first with 3,918 emigrants, *but reckoned in proportion to the number of members still left*, our rural districts, particularly in the South and West, have suffered most. Thus while the Belfast District for this period has lost through emigration a number equal to over one-quarter of its present membership, the Cork District for the same period has lost almost one and a half times its present membership.

On this basis of calculation, the following figures represent the losses of each District for the period under review:—Belfast .28, Portadown .37, Enniskillen .38, Londonderry .60, Clones .60, Dublin .80, Sligo .89, Limerick .90, Waterford .98, and Cork 1.46. For the four South-Western Districts taken together the figure is 1.14. In other words, from these four Districts, we have lost through emigration, during the past 31 years, more than the total membership left in the same area to-day.

Other illuminating figures are those under "Removals and Receptions," which deal with the transfer of members from one circuit to another. Sometimes a District shows a net gain of receptions over removals, at other times a net

loss. But when taken for the whole period since 1899, the only two Districts that show a total net gain are Dublin, 313, and Belfast, 1,754. All the other eight Districts show losses, more or less serious in proportion to their membership. The obvious inference is that there is a fairly steady migration from the rural areas to the large cities, and although exact figures are not easy to obtain, it may be affirmed without hesitation that there is a general tendency for Methodism to concentrate in the towns and diminish in the purely agricultural areas.

The inevitable consequences of these two movements—migration to the cities and emigration to other lands—are reflected in the membership returns; and the two outstanding features of these returns are the remarkable growth of Methodism in and around Belfast, and the equally remarkable decline in the West, South and Midlands. The abbreviated table of membership which follows will make this clear.

In a few cases small fluctuations were caused by the transfer of a circuit or society from one District to another, but these are not sufficient to complicate the general interpretation of the figures, except in the case of Waterford, which lost 162 members by such transfers between 1883 and 1905, the period of general increase, and gained 110 members between 1908 and 1921, the period of general decrease.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF MEMBERSHIP, SOUTHERN AREA, 1880-1929.

Year	Dublin City and Suburbs	Dublin Rural	Waterford District	Cork District	Limerick District	Sligo District
1880	1277	867	951	1568	877	1472
1885	1508	883	1002	1632	889	1589
1890	1571	980	785	1704	870	1580
1895	1764	1047	785	1812	894	1523
1900	2029	1101	786	1871	941	1492
1905	2224	1093	810	1864	911	1387
1910	2313	1000	890	1842	903	1213
1915	2318	810	849	1510	848	944
1920	2300	780	713	1422	728	815
1925	2308	702	599	1136	491	642
1929	2370	639	552	1116	516	588

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF MEMBERSHIP, NORTHERN AREA, 1880-1929.

Year	Enniskillen District	Clones District	Londonderry District	Portadown District	Belfast Rural	*Belfast City and Suburbs
1880	5278	2018	1997	3492	1316	3270
1885	4719	1977	2246	3569	1180	3777
1890	4562	1895	2320	3487	1269	4345
1895	4354	1855	2368	3783	1351	4907
1900	4362	1793	2449	3829	1501	5591
1905	4270	1905	2558	3793	1546	6150
1910	4029	1795	2694	3961	1506	7211
1915	3618	1553	2670	3626	1438	7611
1920	3397	1283	2441	3641	1540	8186
1925	3196	1034	2442	3893	1950	10669
1929	3046	947	2326	4016	2025	11833

The remarkable increases in Belfast city and suburban area speak for themselves. In this connection it is interesting to recall that less than a century ago, Belfast was one circuit, with three ministers and about 800 members.

Dublin, city and suburbs, shows a slight increase, and Cork city, notwithstanding very heavy losses, has splendidly maintained its position. The other portions of the country fall naturally into three distinct groups. Group One is composed of areas in which Methodism, judged by its membership, is either increasing or fairly successfully holding its own, and includes the Districts of Londonderry, Portadown and the rural portions of Belfast. Group Two is composed of areas in which Methodism has shown a more or less continuous decline for the past fifty years, and includes the Districts of Enniskillen and Clones; the latter re-formed after the Union of Primitives and Wesleyans in 1878. Group Three is composed of areas in which Methodism on the whole showed a steady increase up to about the beginning of this century, but since then an ebb tide has set in which as yet shows no sign of turning. It includes the Districts of Sligo, Limerick, Cork, Waterford and the rural portions of Dublin, generally referred to as the "South and West." The Sligo District has

* Under "Belfast, City and Suburbs," are included the following contiguous circuits:—Holywood, Bangor, Lisburn, Newtownards and Carrickfergus.

suffered most severely, and was the first to feel the effect of the ebb tide. In the year 1888 it had a membership of 1,625, but is now reduced to 588, little more than one-third of its former figure.

The formation of a separate junior membership, as directed by the Conference in 1910, might be thought to exaggerate this apparent decline, for at least some of these junior members would otherwise have been included in the full membership returns. But the exaggeration, if any, is very slight. In fact, if all the junior members be added to the figures given, groups two and three would still show considerable decreases. Furthermore, the decreases indicated in the Comparative Table are confirmed by the Census Returns. In the area at present represented by the Irish Free State, there were 17,872 people returned as Methodists in 1901. The number was reduced to 16,440 in 1911, and to 10,663 in 1926. The returns for Northern Ireland equally confirm the implications of our figures for the same areas. It is true that other Protestant denominations registered similar reductions in proportion to their numbers, but this only serves to indicate that the causes are not peculiar to Methodism.

However it is looked at, this drop in membership in the rural areas is serious, but in order to discover its full import, it would be necessary to measure the quality and influence of those who have gone, and calculate all the collateral results of their going. When a home, that has been the centre of Methodist work and influence in any locality, is closed to Methodism because the entire family has migrated, no figures can convey adequately the total loss involved. Yet some reflection of that loss is seen in the figures under "week-night preaching places." Looking at these for the period 1900-1929, the Belfast District appears to have held its own, Londonderry and Portadown Districts show a falling-off of about one-third, and the other seven Districts a falling-off of more than half. In actual figures these seven Districts returned 1,127 such preaching places in 1900, and only 549 in 1929. Even when all allowances are made for possible differences in methods

of calculation, the implications are still sufficiently impressive to set one thinking.

Is it any wonder that the Irish Conference in one of its addresses to the British Conference should state that "the faith and courage of our workers in the rural districts are being more severely tried every year"? Yet that faith and courage have splendidly stood the test; and the story of rural Methodism in the twentieth century is that of a brave struggle not only to hold its own against almost overwhelming difficulties, but wherever possible to successfully recapture the initiative.

Illustrations of this may be found in the resolute way our country circuits have faced greatly increasing financial burdens, notwithstanding a decreasing membership; in the remarkable revival of Open Air Work and in the growing circulation of the Scriptures through our Colportage Department. But these matters are fully dealt with elsewhere in this volume and need no further mention here.

Moreover, in an attempt to solve some of our more pressing rural problems, a "Scheme for Working Large Circuits by Motor Cars" was inaugurated. The scheme, which was first sanctioned by the Conference in 1924, and amended in 1926, provides financial assistance in certain approved cases to enable a minister to purchase and use a motor car. Its chief provisions, in their amended form, are:—(1) A grant of £35 per annum is made from the Home Mission Fund towards depreciation, tax and insurance. (2) If the minister be unable to purchase a car, a loan not exceeding £100 may be made, free of interest, to be repaid within three years. (3) The circuit concerned is expected to pay the running expenses of the car while used for circuit work.

The nature of the difficulties it is sought to overcome will be indicated if we recall the changed Methodist conditions in certain parts of rural Ireland. As already noted, the losses involved through migration and emigration, though widespread, were somewhat unequally distributed. All circuits felt their effects, but some were weakened so seriously as to leave only a scattered remnant of attenuated Methodism, where the membership of a whole county could be packed

into a farm kitchen; while others were reduced to the point of extinction, and disappeared entirely from the Methodist map. In military centres in the Irish Free State these changes were suddenly and strikingly accentuated by the withdrawal in 1922 of the British troops, amongst whom were many "declared Wesleyans".

Now the genius of Methodism has always been its fellowship, and there is a fellowship of circuits as well as of individuals. Wherever Societies or Circuits are grouped sufficiently near to visit one another on all important occasions, to share in one another's triumphs, and through friendly emulation to keep one another keen we have the Methodist connexional spirit at its best; and the general and increasing use of motor cars by our people has greatly helped in this matter, by linking up many places previously out of touch with each other.

But where the intervening distances are so great as to render such fellowship impossible, Methodism survives with considerable difficulty. Yet that has become the plight of several circuits and many families in those Methodistically lonesome areas of rural Ireland. What are we to do with these isolated families, and lonely outposts, and small causes, scattered widely over large areas, otherwise barren of Methodist material? To desert them is unthinkable, yet how to minister to them is a problem of some perplexity. Moreover, and interwoven with this, there is the problem of the disheartened minister in his solitary station trying to preach to these dwindling remnants of what were once fair-sized congregations, with too much to do on Sunday, not enough throughout the week, and both minister and people strained to the utmost to keep the circuit out of debt.

A partial solution of these problems is to link up weaker causes with strong centres, wherever possible, to reduce the total ministerial staff, and to provide motor cars with which to work the extended area. The scheme is in operation on several circuits, but the outstanding and most successful example of its working is found on the present Carlow Circuit. The old Carlow Circuit, with its seven churches and two ministers, tested the strength of our most vigorous men.

Yet when the chaplain and British troops were withdrawn from the Curragh, the remaining civilian families were placed under the care of the Carlow ministers. Then in 1923, owing to the shortage of men, the minister was withdrawn from Kilkenny, the whole of the Kilkenny Circuit, except Bonlea, added to Carlow, and the entire area worked by two ministers using motor cars and loyally supported by a devoted band of local preachers.

The success of the experiment is not now open to doubt. It has increased the work of each minister sufficiently to keep the most energetic man fully employed. Yet under the new conditions it is done in comfort and without undue fatigue, while the challenge of the bigger task is in itself a most effective stimulus. It enables the ministers to preach each Sunday in several different and widely separated chapels, and keep in close touch with every congregation on the circuit. It has made possible the opening of new and distant preaching places, and the reopening of others that had been closed for years. It immediately eased the financial strain through the reduction of expenditure, and put fresh heart into Stewards and Leaders through the inspiration of the enlarged Quarterly Meeting. It has laid a new emphasis on the brotherhood of Methodism by broadening the area of mutual interest and responsibility; while recent encouraging developments made it necessary to appoint a third minister to the circuit in 1928.

The chief drawback is the difficulty of finding time either for effective concentration on any one centre, or adequate study and preparation for the pulpit. But this is more than counterbalanced by the many advantages on the other side. How far the scheme can be extended to meet the need of areas, not yet included, is a matter that will require the most careful consideration.

In addition to adopting the Motor Car Scheme, a very interesting experiment in friendly co-operation has been tried at Clonmel, where since 1923 the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations have, at their own request, regularly worshipped together. The united services, morning and evening, are held alternately in each church, as are also the weekly prayer

meetings; and the three outposts—two Presbyterian and one Methodist—are taken in turn by whichever minister is not planned for the united service in town at the same hour. The work is shared by both ministers with perfect equality and brotherliness, even to the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Yet each Church is responsible for its own finances, and preserves intact its own organisation. By this arrangement our Presbyterian friends have been enabled to do with one minister the work hitherto done by two; and an admirable object lesson has been set for all Christian people. A similar spirit of goodwill everywhere would do much to make "the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain."

As to the outlook for Methodism in rural Ireland, reports from some circuits are full of hope and encouragement,—services are well attended; conversions are taking place; our people commend their religion by their Christian character and stainless life, and support their Church with exceeding generosity and unswerving loyalty; the younger men and women are enthusiastic in service and definitely interested in the deeper things of the spirit; Sunday schools and all other organisations are flourishing; the baptismal register is rapidly filling up; everybody is in good heart; and the watchword is, "Advance along the whole line!"

But reports from other circuits present a less cheerful view. They refer regretfully to the steady drain of emigration; the paucity of children; diminishing numbers; limited opportunities for aggressive work; lack of interest in spiritual matters or response to spiritual claims, or on the other hand, the emotional shallowness that is for ever seeking the excitement of the special mission wheresoever and by whomsoever conducted; unwillingness to accept responsibility or to undertake religious work of any kind; apathy on the part of traditional Methodists; the excessive craze for pleasure that leaves no room for interest in the Kingdom of God; the meagreness of apparent results; the unending financial strain; and in some cases, "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people."

Probably no one circuit can be said to belong wholly to either category. Most circuits contain an admixture of both hopeful and disappointing features in varying proportions. There are fruit-bearing branches, and branches that produce nothing but leaves, and perhaps a certain amount of dead wood that calls for the careful and judicious use of the pruning knife. But the tree is alive, and given a Pentecostal infusion of the Spirit of power, there is no limit to its fruit-bearing possibilities.

In some areas it is admittedly difficult to face the Methodist future hopefully, but the operations of the Holy Spirit cannot always be anticipated. Even Pentecost gave no clear indication of its approach, yet it transformed the entire situation and outlook. A few weak, timid human agents suddenly became dynamic, and immediately things began to happen. Was it not when they "had toiled all the night, and taken nothing," that the Master said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught"? It did not seem worth while. "Nevertheless," said Peter, and we would fain make the same reply, "at Thy word I will let down the net."

But is our Methodist witness still needed in Ireland? That is for us the question that must take precedence of every other. If it be, and we who are Methodists have no doubt about the answer, then we need "not be troubled about to-morrow; to-morrow will take care of itself." But whether that witness is to be borne by a distinct and separate Church as at present, or eventually to become part of a great United Church, big enough and broad enough to embrace every form of Christian service, must await the leading of the Spirit of God.

III

IRISH METHODISM AND THEOLOGY.

THE LATE REV. J. C. ROBERTSON, M.A., B.D.

MEN have found it necessary for conscience' sake to sever their connection with the Church to which they belonged, and organize themselves into independent Churches, because they had become convinced that the Church from which they seceded was teaching false doctrine. In such a case, the intellectual or theological side of Church life is bound to be stressed: John Wesley ever stoutly maintained that his theology was that of the Church of England, and was accustomed to quote from Articles, Homilies and Prayerbook in support of the doctrines to which he gave prominence in his preaching. He never meant to separate himself and his followers from the Church of England. His words on the subject could hardly have been more explicit. In some ways even in his life-time Methodism developed in spite of John Wesley.

It is important and very interesting to note the various indications of his attitude to theology left us by our Founder. Perhaps the most precise and detailed piece of evidence is to be found in the Articles of Religion which he provided for the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, when it set out on its wonderful career. These number twenty-five, twenty-four of which Wesley took from the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. It would occupy too much space to set down all his omissions and alterations. Suffice it to say that such articles as the third, "Of the going down of Christ into Hell," the eighth, "Of the Three Creeds," and the seventeenth, "Of Predestination and Election," disappear. And on the other side it is noteworthy that notwithstanding the

constant stress he laid on the Witness of the Spirit and Entire Sanctification, he did not venture to frame articles on these vital matters for the new Church. We may agree with Stevens that "he evidently designed the articles to be the briefest and barest possible symbol of expedient doctrines."

Amongst the sermons which we accept as standard are included the two on Bigotry and Catholic Spirit. These throw a clear light on Wesley's mode of dealing with points of doctrine over which men have often been bitterly estranged. Some of them he describes as "points of no moment, and many times such as religion had no concern in." The sermon on Catholic Spirit especially makes it abundantly clear that this man of rigid logic and strong convictions found it possible to accept as equally Christian with himself those from whom he might differ widely in opinions and modes of worship. It must have cost him much to make up his mind that it was impossible to maintain that everyone "who is born in England ought to be a member of that which is styled the Church of England," though he "was once a zealous maintainer of this."

If we find him, therefore, cutting down to a minimum what might provoke controversy, and prepared to give the right hand of fellowship to those whom he could hardly count orthodox, we need not be surprised to find our standards consisting not of carefully prepared definitions such as other Churches are bound by, but forty-four sermons and a volume of notes on the New Testament. Obviously there could not be any "system of formal or speculative theology" in such documents.

But these sermons and notes have this quite inestimable characteristic, that they continually drive those who accept and study them back to the living facts of spiritual experience, and the plain language of Holy Scripture. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Dr. Lidgett saying, in the *New History of Methodism*, that "the theology of all branches of Methodism is identical. . . . Methodism owes not merely its existence, but its characteristic theology and institutions, to a revival of religion. It depends absolutely upon the main-

tenance of the original standard of devotion and experience, not merely for its well-being, but even for its integrity. . . . The fundamental unity of Methodism is created by a similarity of spiritual experience and temperament, by a common *ethos*." This *ethos*, he claims, is the determinative factor in the case of Methodism.

The scholars and thinkers of Methodism have made a not unworthy contribution to the exegesis and exposition of Holy Writ, and to the modern development of sound doctrine. Indeed, some of them have done work which is rightly counted indispensable in their particular subjects. But it ought to be clear now that nobody can hope to understand Methodism who does not first of all grasp the fact that it was a religious as distinct from a theological movement. It will lose its identity if it ever becomes theological as distinct from religious. Too theological it cannot be, provided the theology comes forth from the glowing crucible of vivid, living experience of God in Christ.

Two years before the century began Hugh Price Hughes was President of the Conference. Conference met in Dublin that year, and on the Sunday afternoon he preached in the Metropolitan Hall from the text, "Bring him unto Me." In the course of the sermon he said, "If they had common sense, they would never use any argument for Christianity except Christ. . . . This was ever the word of Christ, 'Bring him to Me.' He did not say, 'Bring him to the Bible'—a very good thing—but the essential thing was to bring him to Christ. Some said they had difficulties about the Mosaic cosmogony; they could not reconcile the first chapter of Genesis with evolution. That did not matter; come to Christ. . . . The fatal mistake of the Protestants of the seventeenth century was to substitute the Bible for the living Word of God. . . . Christ was enough; He was the great Son of God, and when they had Him they had everything.

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want.

That was the grandest line of poetry ever written."

These sentences, culled from the report of the sermon in the columns of the *Christian Advocate*, may seem almost

turgid. But uttered, as they were, by the man who, of all the men of our time, may be said to have embodied most fully the Methodist spirit, with all his passionate fervour thrown into their utterance, they set in motion thoughts and impulses in the strength of which many young Methodists entered the new century.

Neither before nor since that date has Irish Methodism ever strayed very far from the centre. It has never ceased to be evangelical and aggressively evangelistic. Perhaps in consequence it has never felt acutely the pressure of the problems which have disturbed other Churches, even other sections of world-wide Methodism.

There seem to be two ways in which we may reach our theological point of view. Either we may think of a defined territory with its clearly marked frontier, or we may think of a centre from which truth radiates. If we adopt the former point of view, we must inevitably introduce into our thinking much of the negative and controversial. The frontier must be defended. On the other hand, the figure of a centre from which we work makes for positive thinking, and one is conscious of advance rather than of repelling attacks. This latter seems always to have been the point of view of Irish Methodism. Instinctively her preachers have felt the importance of the direct and evangelical element in their message, and, with very few exceptions, have abstained from controversy.

Most of the senior ministers were brought up on Watson and Pope, of whom the former published his *Theological Institutes* in 1823, and the latter produced his three massive volumes a full half century ago. They were giants both, and those who learned at their feet became themselves preachers and theologians of no mean stature.

But even these seniors have lived to step into a veritably new world, and how much more those who are still in the early part of their ministry! Consider the following facts.

The new psychology has developed and spread out into its many ramifications. The Student Christian Movement, which is to-day so influential in the life of the Colleges and Universities of the world, was founded as the Student

Volunteers in America in 1886, and in Great Britain six years later. In 1900 John R. Mott published *The Evangelisation of the World in This Generation*, and in 1910 was held the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, in which all the denominations of Protestant Christianity came together to study and plan for the wisest and most economical use of their resources in a world campaign.

And then within four years came catastrophe. Perhaps we are still too close to the facts to be able to count up our gains and losses from the War. This much seems true. We were called to face questions that refused to be suppressed, and that seemed to shake the very foundations of the City of God. It was inevitable that for good or ill we should open our hearts to new thoughts if they would help us to face the new situation. We became willing to restate, even, if need be, to reconstruct our theology. Some of the rebellion against the merely conventional, so characteristic of the post-war generation, so disconcerting to the staid and elderly, but so indicative, at least in part, of a determination to reach reality, could not but invade even the study of the preacher.

Let us try to visualise the new conditions, even if it be partially and superficially. In every realm of thought and life what had been for generations taken for granted as finally proved has been brought into question. The interests of everyday life have been multiplied, and multiplied again. The speed of an express train has been doubled by the motor-car, and quadrupled by the aeroplane. The human voice has girdled the earth in a fraction of a second. The illustrated papers of to-day do not differ more from their fore-runners of fifty years ago, than the furniture of the minds of this generation differs from the ordinary subjects of thought and conversation amongst their grandparents. The vocabulary of science and philosophy has been revolutionised, and the very illustrations of spiritual truth at our disposal would have been wholly unintelligible in those days. And illustrations subtly, but really, influence the apprehension of the truths they are used to illumine.

During the period of which we have been thinking theological studies had not been standing still. J. H. Moulton

published *An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek* in 1895. In that same year Deissmann, in his *Bible Studies*, published the results of his investigations amongst the papyri and ostraca of Egypt, and Moulton's grammar was immediately out-of-date. In the next edition the introduction had to be re-written, and many corrections had to be made throughout the book. The brilliant and wonderfully interesting *Prolegomena*, by the same author, published ten years later, made it evident that the grammar of New Testament Greek must be largely on new lines, and that the illustrations of New Testament phraseology must be derived from hitherto unknown sources. For another decade Moulton worked at the Grammar of which the *Prolegomena* formed the first instalment. When his tragic death left the pioneer's work unfinished, it was fortunate that in Dr. W. F. Howard was found one who may be confidently expected to carry to completion his predecessor's plans.

It was during the last decade of the old century and the first of the new that Drs. Beet and Lidgett produced their most important works. From Dr. Beet we learned to use the Bible scientifically, and to abandon the indiscriminate use of proof-texts. Dr. Lidgett taught us to take the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God seriously, to see in it the fundamental doctrine of Christianity and to use it in the effort to re-state our theology in living form.

Immediately after the War came Peake's amazing *Commentary on the Bible*. The editor brought to his aid a brilliant band of scholars of widely divergent points of view. He himself planned the book with such skill, and edited it with such thoroughness and accuracy, that it became in his hands a real unity. The immense index must have involved almost overwhelming labour. The book brings within the reach of the reader of good average intelligence the results of present-day study of the Bible. It is not a book to be used superficially with any chance of success. The articles call for careful study, and the actual commentary is meagre and unsatisfactory without them. But the more it is really used the more astonished does its student become at the wealth of material placed at his disposal.

Much less technical than Peake, but the work of just as consummate scholarship, is another Methodist commentary. Dr. David Downey and his helpers have given the preacher a real treasure in *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*. The contributors represent most of the Protestant Churches, and the leading Colleges and Universities of America and Great Britain. As Dr. Downey says in the Foreword, "The Commentary will be found to be characterized by sound but unobtrusive scholarship, evangelical sympathy, social idealism, religious vitality, and directness and simplicity of expression."

* * *

*What has been the effect of all this advance on the theology of our Church? The answer is that, except in matters of phraseology and emphasis, the position remains essentially the same as it did at the beginning of the century. Christ is still the Centre of Methodist theology and Methodist doctrine is based on and grows out of experience of the Living Christ.

But, it may be asked, has not Biblical criticism made a Christo-centric theology less tenable than formerly? Have the critics not been busy in the attempt to discriminate between what Jesus actually said and did and what has been attributed to Him by eager followers? Has it not been maintained that the miraculous elements in the Gospels have been "heightened" by the writers, that it is only in Mark we get anything approaching a faithful picture of the Christ, and that even in Mark there is much that is disputable? In view of this, can we any longer maintain the simple theological position outlined by Hugh Price Hughes?

The answer is quite plain. In the first place, assuming what is very disputable—that the findings of even the most radical of the critics are sound, the main impressions, which the Jesus of the Gospels conveys, are quite clear. Even if all the Gospels went except Mark, that narrative sets before us a Life unique in spiritual and moral qualities. Even if the special miracles had to go, this Central Miracle—Christ Himself—would remain. It is significant that the critics who

*See note in Preface.

have been most drastic in their treatment of the Gospels have been influenced in their rejection of saying and incidents attributed to Jesus solely on the ground that they are not what we would expect from One so singularly noble. Wherever their conception of the Christ came from, they have no doubt as to what it is. Moreover, it is surely significant, again assuming the findings of extreme critics to be assured, that the men of the Apostolic age were so impressed with Jesus as to be anxious to heighten the miraculous elements.

But an important fact has to be added: The Christ who is the Centre of Methodist theology is the *Christ of Experience* as well as the Jesus of history. When Methodists claim that their theology is centred in experience they do not mean any kind of experience. The charge of subjectivism often levelled against Methodist theology is due to a failure to see that it centres not so much in experience as in the Christ who is experienced. There is a very close kinship between the theology of Methodism on this point and that of Schleiermacher. But there is one important difference—in Schleiermacher's teaching Christ is discovered in experience and there is not sufficient justice done to the Christ of history. Methodist theology, on the other hand, is based on the Christ of the Gospels, as interpreted by the corporate Christian experience. Experience for Methodists is always experience of Jesus.

Strong support for this position may be drawn from the Fourth Gospel as that is generally interpreted to-day. This Gospel is not another biography, though there is much biographical matter in it: what it especially represents is the spirit of Jesus finding expression through the beautiful mind of the author. To John, Jesus was a Living Reality rather than a mere memory. The experienced Christ is the core of John's Gospel: it is the core of Methodist theology.

Pressing out from Christ as Centre, the doctrine of God is readily determined. It cannot be disputed that the burden of Christ's teaching was the *Fatherhood of God*, and Methodists have put the supreme emphasis here in its account

of the Divine nature. If a theological system is built up apart from Christ, the emphasis may be placed on some other quality. The history of doctrine furnishes numerous illustrations of this. Thomas Aquinas, for example, begins his vast theological treatise by considerations that owe nothing at all to Christ, and so the essential attributes which he ascribes to God are Simplicity, Perfection, Goodness, Infinity, Eternity and Unity. Love and Fatherhood are quite incidental in his theology. Calvin may be referred to in the same connection. Calvin was one of the Church's very greatest theologians, but his theology began with God rather than with Christ. Hence it was possible for him to expatiate on Sovereignty rather than on Fatherhood as the essential Divine attribute. From this there followed the denial of human freedom and the doctrine of election which, in its rigid form, the followers of Calvin no longer hold.

Calvin supported his doctrine from Pauline passages, and Barth, who is at present resuscitating the essential teaching of Calvin, is also supporting it almost wholly from Paul. In both Calvinism and Barthianism Paul seems to be overdone, to the neglect of the teaching of Jesus. This tacit setting of Paul over against Jesus is indefensible. Moreover such New Testament scholars as Deissman, Sydney Cave, and Ernest Scott have contended that Paul was not a theologian, but rather a missionary constrained by the love of Christ. No theological system should, therefore, be built up on isolated passages from Paul, or indeed from any other Biblical writer. It leads to hopeless confusion to treat the Bible as an "armoury of proof texts." Its teaching should be taken as a whole and on this basis doctrine should be established. No one can carefully read Paul without realising that the love of God as revealed in Jesus forms the central fact of his teaching and the main burden of his message. If this is so, there is no contradiction between Jesus and Paul. God for Paul was "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Methodists do not deny the Sovereignty of God, but they look upon it as involved in Fatherhood. As Dr.

Scott Lidgett puts it (*God, Christ and the Church*, p. 26): "Sovereignty is an essential element and aspect of Fatherhood. It emphasises Authority, the Authority of spiritual perfection. . . . Yet this Authority, because it is that of a spiritual and ethical perfection, cannot reside in the bare will and sheer omnipotence of God. It springs from His inmost character, and that character is revealed in Grace."

From the unreserved acceptance of the Fatherhood of God other characteristic doctrines of Methodism logically follow. Of these the most important is the *theology of atonement*. Clearly the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is quite incompatible with belief in a limited atonement, and it has always been a chief doctrine of Methodism that Christ died for all so that all may come to the saving knowledge of God. Methodist theology on this as on so many other points is most clearly expressed in Methodist hymnology. So Charles Wesley wrote:

The world He suffered to redeem;
For all He hath the atonement made;
For those that will not come to Him,
The ransom of His life was paid.

The thought that either the justice or glory of God can be seen in limiting the atonement is repugnant to true Christian sentiment. Surely an unlimited atonement is a declaration rather than a denial of God's justice.

Doctrines of the Cross are always difficult sections of theology. But again it may be claimed that it is from the standpoint of Fatherhood that the clearest insight into its meaning can be obtained.

There is no doubt that the Cross is the crowning expression of God's love, and Methodists believe and love to preach all that the "moral sense" theory of the Atonement stands for. They cannot believe that the Atonement made a difference in God—as, for example, that it abated His anger towards men. This would be a denial of the obvious truth that God and Jesus are essentially One in purpose and spirit and that God's love cannot be changed even by men's

sin. If we are to think of Christ's death as a propitiation, we must also think of that propitiation as having been provided by God Himself.

Yet Methodist theology is not content with the moral sense theory. It cannot ignore the numerous passages that suggest that in some sense Christ bore our sin. The Cross, that is, is more than an *appeal*. It is a *transaction*, the meaning of which only becomes plain in the light of forgiveness. For forgiveness is the problem with which the Cross deals; and as there cannot be *perfect moral forgiveness* in which the forgiver does not share in some way the sin of the person forgiven, so the sacrificial going out of God to bear the sin of men is of the essence of the Cross. Such a view best represents present-day Methodist theology of Atonement, and it is reached through the doctrine of Divine Fatherhood.

In these three vital doctrines there are important practical implications, and these explain what may be claimed as unique in the *ethos* of Methodism. Methodism's passion for social service and its missionary spirit, for example, derive their inspiration from belief in God's Fatherhood with its corollary—the brotherhood of the entire human race. Moreover, the dominating interest of Methodism has been the salvation of the individual. For this reason the emphasis of Methodist theologians has always been placed on the experimental doctrines.

Wesley allowed the utmost liberty in relation to non-essential or speculative beliefs, such as the theories of Biblical inspiration or the second coming of Christ. But he was insistent on the need for a clear understanding of such doctrines as conversion, assurance, and Christian perfection. These are still the most important of the distinctive doctrines of Methodism. The meaning and value of conversion has received attention in Chapter IV. Assurance, or the witness of the spirit, simply means the primacy of religious experience in the sense in which "experience" has been discussed in this chapter. The expression, "the witness of the Spirit," is seldom heard in modern Methodist preaching, but the

experience is emphasised as much as ever. Methodists believe still in personal experience as the basis of religious certainty. Nor is the expression "Christian perfection" much in use in modern Methodist theology, but the doctrine is by no means neglected. In fact, the test of true conversion is no longer the mere *fact* of conversion, but the life transformed. The conviction that God can enter human life and transform and re-transform it is the essence of Christian perfection as preached by Methodists from the beginning, and it has never received greater emphasis than in the twentieth century.

IV

IRISH METHODISM AND EVANGELISM.

REV. W. L. NORTHRIDGE, M.A., Ph.D.

METHODISM is at once the youngest and numerically the largest of the Protestant denominations. In less than two hundred years it has reached a total of more than forty million adherents. This impressive fact finds its explanation, as in the case of all great religious movements, in the vivid and rich spiritual experience of its founder and in the vitality of the message which he and his successors proclaimed. After the spiritual crisis through which he passed in Aldersgate Street, Wesley was nothing but an evangelist. At the street corner, in the open fields, the horse-fairs, the mining pits, the jails—wherever he could find men—he preached his passionate evangel. The burden of his preaching always and everywhere was that all men needed Christ and that all could experience forgiveness and new life in Him. It was the message England needed and the masses were waiting for. It led to one of the most widespread religious awakenings of all time. Through it England was saved from revolution—such is the testimony of the dispassionate historian—and out of it came the rise of Methodism. It was inevitable that such a vital movement in a time of spiritual decadence should develop rapidly and organize itself into a separate branch of the church of Christ notable above everything else for persistent, aggressive evangelism. Its right to independent existence is in Ireland even yet questioned by a minority, but this is due to a failure to appreciate the facts of history as well as the spirit of Methodism. Wesley never explicitly sanctioned, but rather openly discouraged secession from the Church of England. There was no doubt about his affection for and loyalty to that church, but that separate

development was inevitable is now freely admitted by Church of England leaders. The fact is that Wesley himself did not find the freedom and scope he needed within the parent church. The majority of the pulpits were closed to him, and his converts, large numbers of whom had no previous connection with the established church, did not feel at home in a form of service that seemed to them devoid of reality and in an atmosphere lacking in spiritual warmth. Development into a separate church in these circumstances was the only alternative to the ultimate extinction of the new movement.

The right of Methodism to function, unhampered, in its own way is more seriously challenged than its right of separate existence. Its evangelistic operations are still looked upon by other churches with suspicion if not with hostility. This probably only now applies to Ireland, and it is due in some measure to the fact that the Protestant community has been steadily diminishing in the counties of the South and West and each church is jealously on the watch over its own depleted membership. Whatever be the reason, the open air preaching, tent missions, cottage services and other forms of missionary activity for which Methodism has always been noted are often regarded as irritating encroachments and breaches of denominational etiquette.

What Methodism claims, however, and all it claims, is freedom to preach its message in its own way to all who desire to hear it. It holds that the lapsed are not the preserves of any denomination. There are no *lapsed* Episcopalians, Presbyterians or Methodists. Those who are not attached to any church or who do not attend the church with which they have nominal connection are simply non-church goers who need to be brought into the fellowship of Christ. Methodism has always found amongst such a congenial field for evangelism. It welcomes heartily the co-operation of the other churches, but with or without this, it cannot ignore the needs of those who are out of touch with the spirit of vital religion.

That there may be no ground for misunderstandings or suspicions as regards the motives in Methodist evangelism, our Church has clearly defined its position in relation to

members of other Churches who have been converted through its agencies. An important resolution on the subject is printed year by year in the Minutes of the Conference. The resolution reads:

Whereas there are in many localities in Ireland districts of country lying outside our own Circuit organisation and not directly touched by the efforts of any of the other Protestant Churches; and whereas the Conference desires to be increasingly mindful of the great obligation which rests upon it to bring, by every means available, the Gospel in its saving effects to our fellow-countrymen, without regard to creed or party; and whereas it is sometimes alleged that in our evangelistic efforts we fail to make it sufficiently clear that we do not desire that persons blessed through our instrumentality should be withdrawn from their own Churches:

The Conference thinks it right authoritatively to declare that our first and great object in the proclamation of the Gospel by such means is the salvation of souls; and it is our direction to all agents of our Church that they shall adopt every reasonable method to make known upon such occasions that the first duty of converts is to settle down in their own Churches, if these be evangelical, and to work in their own sphere for the salvation of those in whom they are interested.

The expression "if these be evangelical" towards the end of the resolution has been objected to as giving an excuse to individual Methodist evangelists to press converts from other Churches into Methodist membership. This policy the Church generally discountenances, but it has to consider as of paramount importance the spiritual needs of the converts. Often no provision is made to meet these in the local Church to which the converts have been nominally attached. In such circumstances Methodism does not refuse membership, since to do so would defeat the ends of evangelism. The liberty that it reserves to itself in this respect it does not deny to other Churches in circumstances in which it would be best

for the spiritual life of a convert from Methodism to settle elsewhere.

It is only just to Methodism to make these points clear before going on to the story of twentieth century Methodist evangelism. Our Church only asks for that liberty in the work of evangelism in Ireland that it gladly allows to all other denominations.

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE PERIOD

There has been no revival in Ireland so far in the twentieth century comparable to the great movement of 1859, which Crookshank has described in his *History of Methodism*. In 1902 and again in 1904 efforts were made in Belfast to create a revival through the Gipsy Smith and Torrey and Alexander missions of those dates. Similar efforts were put forth in Dublin and other centres, but no widespread movements resulted, though much good was done locally. In 1922-23, however, a notable evangelistic movement began in Belfast and spread into the northern counties. Throughout England at the same time there was a general awakening of new interest in religion, developing in some places into intense revival movements. Everything at the time was favourable to religion. Philosophic materialism had broken down and there followed a widespread belief in the ultimate spiritual nature of the universe to which leading scientists were bearing witness. This, in addition to the disillusionments which the war had created and the need for the comforts of religion by the thousands who were bereaved, accounted for the widespread turning to God which the Churches in England experienced.

In Ireland an additional factor in the situation was the civil war of 1922, detailed in another chapter. All parts of the country at the time experienced a reign of terror, but the campaign of murder and destruction of property had reached in that year alarming proportions. Strenuous efforts at conciliation were put forth by the Churches, in addition to the attempts of the military and police force to protect life and property. The utmost efforts at peace were unavailing—peace-loving people were in despair, but the Churches united

in daily prayer and sought the intervention of God. That intervention took place with amazing suddenness in an intense religious awakening, and the peace that so quickly followed was due in large measure to the new spirit that quickly changed the temper of the masses. Thousands of those implicated in "the trouble," as it was commonly called, were converted. Roman Catholics as well as Protestants were impressed. A new toleration came to life. It was customary in Belfast to see large processions of witnesses consisting of hundreds of new converts marching in song through the city, while daily services were held during the dinner hour in factories and shipyard workshops. Remarkable stories were in circulation telling of broken friendships healed, severed families reunited, crimes confessed and stolen property restored. Evangelistic missions in most of the Churches took place, and special evangelists were attracted to Belfast and the towns of the North.

Much good was done under the influence of these evangelists, but the movements that they led were confined almost exclusively to the lapsed masses of the artisan and labouring classes. Many of the roughest of these have become notable Christian workers. It is a tribute to the value of the work done that a very large number of converts from amongst the poorest of the people have found their way since into the Christian Ministry in America and Canada, while a good percentage of the candidates that Irish Methodism has trained for its ministry in recent years are its direct fruits.

Allowing all this, it must be said that harm was done by the excesses and crude methods of some of these evangelists. Hundreds were borne on the waves of emotionalism to a profession of religion without deep convictions or any knowledge of what the Christian life implied. The inevitable reaction has expressed itself in two ways; in the return to the old ways of life of hundreds of those who professed conversion, and in an openly hostile attitude to traditional and mass evangelism on the part of large sections of the ministry. The latter fact is to be deplored, for there are values in mass evangelism that should be preserved. The intense emotionalism and use of suggestion so often criticised

in mass movements can be powerfully used by the understanding evangelist in permanently changing human lives, *but careful shepherding, instruction and fellowship must follow.* If these are not provided, wholesale backsliding is bound to take place.

Mass evangelism is often thought to be devoid of ethical value. There is some reason for this criticism when the temper and practices of many individual converts are thought of. But on the other hand revivals have also to their credit many converts whose Christian lives have been beyond reproach. Moreover, the moral effect of a widespread revival on the general life of a community cannot be questioned. The ethical value of the awakening of 1922, for example, undoubtedly expressed itself in a far-reaching temperance bill that passed through the Northern Parliament immediately afterwards. This act was the result of the Churches demand, strengthened and stirred to new life by the revival. Large numbers of new Church members had been drunkards before their conversion. They knew from bitter experience the evils of the traffic. These swelled the ranks of an impressive Methodist Temperance Demonstration in which Methodists marched from different ends of Belfast, carrying Temperance banners and led by bands, to the city's centre. They crowded the largest halls, where meetings were held and Temperance reform resolutions were enthusiastically adopted. Another demonstration, in which all the Churches united, followed. As a result, public opinion was so strongly in favour of Temperance legislation that the Government had no difficulty in promoting an important measure.

Synchronizing with the intense evangelistic movement in the North, a new spirit of goodwill came over Southern Ireland, offering Methodism a fresh opportunity to reorganise its special evangelistic mission in the South and West. How that work has since developed reveals the vitality and resource of our Church and its readiness to grapple with the demands of a new situation.

OPEN-AIR EVANGELISM

In the first place, Methodist open-air evangelism was reorganized and carried on with new enthusiasm. The modern

history of Methodist open-air preaching dates from 1890, when Rev. William Harpur, who was then stationed in Arklow, began its revival in the fairs and markets. In order to consolidate and develop his work, the Central Ireland Mission was formed in 1897, with its headquarters at Athlone. Four years later Mr. Harpur was set free to devote his whole time to the organization of this work. With a staff of several evangelists and the voluntary help of many ministers he reached out to places hitherto untouched, and, with ringing voice and an all-absorbing love, he commended his Saviour to his fellow-countrymen. Mr. Harpur passed away in 1925, but so efficiently had he organized the work that it was maintained and extended in a remarkable degree by those who had caught his spirit.

From 1909 onwards each District Synod elected its own organizing secretary and made itself responsible for the work within its own area. But during the trouble out of which the Free State was born outdoor evangelism had to be discontinued. When peaceful conditions were restored not only was a new spirit of toleration discovered throughout the country, but there was an unprecedented eagerness on the part of all Irishmen to hear the Gospel in song and story. Open-air work was at once reorganized and has been carried on since on a larger scale than at any previous period of Methodist history.

In 1926, Rev. W. W. Hutchinson was appointed as the organizer of the work in the South and West. His peculiar fitness for the position was unquestioned and led the Conference in 1929 to set him free from all other duties so that open-air evangelism could be more widely and thoroughly prosecuted under his superintendence.

EVANGELISM THROUGH COLPORTAGE

The second agency which Irish Methodism employs in its efforts to bring the Gospel to all Irishmen is Colportage. It employs a number of godly and tactful men whose business it is to enter the homes of the people and distribute or sell copies of the Scriptures and books of devotion. Whenever

possible, these men read and expound portions of the Gospel in the homes they visit, and pray with the people.

The first Methodist Colportage Society* was formed on the Cork District in 1889. The movement was initiated by Rev. Caleb S. Laird, M.A., who brought the matter before the District Meeting held in Skibbereen on August 22nd, 1888, and obtained its approval.

The first Colporteur appointed was William Young, who began his work in April, 1889. Religion to him was a living experience and filled his heart with a great love for his fellowmen. Stories of his originality are still being told, for he had a keen sense of humour and a remarkable gift of repartee that never left a sting. He could both sing and speak fluently in Irish, and hearts were often melted as he crooned the Celtic versions of such hymns as

"When I survey the Wondrous Cross," or
"There is a fountain filled with blood."

In 1895 Colportage was officially recognised as a branch of the Home Mission Department. Each District then formed its own Colportage Society and the work, which was financed at first by private subscriptions alone, began to receive aid from the Home Mission Fund. In 1906 the work was brought under the supervision of the Evangelistic Committee, which three years later undertook the purchase of all books required by the various colporteurs.

The need for further development became urgent after 1922, and an importance advance was made in 1924 when Rev. P. E. Donovan, who had already served twenty years as General Missionary, was appointed Joint Secretary with the late Rev. L. H. Cullen, and the Conference sanctioned an increase in the Colportage staff. The following year Mr. Donovan became sole General Secretary and opened an office in Abbey Street, Dublin. The scheme was further advanced in 1928, when the General Mission was discontinued and Mr. Donovan was set apart to give his whole time to

*Rev. W. H. Massey kindly supplied the principal facts incorporated in this Section on Colportage and, adds that "an Irish-speaking Colporteur was employed on the Galway Mission about the year 1861."

Colportage work. The sales for 1928-29 show how fully this appointment has been justified. Altogether 70,366 books were sold in that year, of which 46,707 were Bibles, Testaments, Gospels and Scripture portions, or about eight times what they were in 1924.

SPECIAL MISSION AGENCIES

Rev. P. E. Donovan was the last of a long succession of General Missionaries whose duty it was to conduct special missions in Methodist churches and halls in all parts of the country. It is not likely that the Church will remain indefinitely without such an appointment, but for the present what was known as the General Mission has been discontinued.

The appointment in 1923 of four lady evangelists for work in rural districts was in some measure a substitute for the General Mission. These women have conducted on an average twenty missions each year. As a venture inspired directly by the revival, it has been justified in notable successes in some places, especially amongst women and young people. The feeling, however, is steadily growing that it is a mistake to depend too much on the special evangelist, and accordingly the principle, "every man his own evangelist," is steadily taking root. Increasingly the ministers themselves, aided by local preachers, are undertaking their own evangelism in their own way with most gratifying results.

All the special agencies of evangelism referred to were in 1929 co-ordinated and are now supervised by the General Committee of Management, the Standing Committee of which meets each month in Dublin to receive reports of the work done and give such counsel as is needed.

PRESENT-DAY TENDENCIES

From the foregoing account of the special evangelistic activities of Irish Methodism it is plain that twentieth century Methodism has lost none of its evangelistic interest or passion by any alleged modernist or other influence and that the old methods are by no means wholly discarded. Modifications, however, in various directions have been taking place in recent years. Much thinking has been done on such

questions as the basis of appeal in evangelism and the meaning of the Christian life. Fuller insight on these fundamental matters has led inevitably to the adoption of a variety of methods whereby the ends of true evangelism may be more fully realised than formerly. With a brief consideration of these points this chapter will conclude.

First, there has been coming into evangelism in recent years an important modification in the *basis of appeal*. The motive for surrender to Christ commonly urged in evangelism was non-moral. It consisted in an appeal to sinful men to get right with God merely to "escape the death that never, never dies." Evangelistic preaching was mainly concerned with such themes as "heaven," "hell," "the wrath of God," "the imminent reappearing of Jesus," "the uncertainty of life." Obviously the appeal in such evangelism as these themes indicate was unethical, and it is no wonder that the "converts" were not always Christians in the only sense in which that term should be understood—people who through fellowship with Christ are growing like Him.

Normally Methodist evangelism has been free from crude eschatological teaching. This was true of Wesley's own work. For while the appeal to fear was present, it was always based on the seriousness of sin and the solemn consequences that are inevitable for the whole of life if wilful wrongdoing was persisted in. And it was the preaching of Jesus in His holiness and love that awakened sinful people to their need of salvation. Contact, however, with evangelists of other schools of theological and evangelistic tradition brought to Methodist evangelism the eschatological setting referred to, and our Church, realising the dangers and anxious to preserve its own distinctive notes, legislated against the employment in any of our churches of "unauthorised" evangelists. At present lurid eschatology is conspicuous by its absence in Methodist preaching and to young Methodists it makes no appeal.

In the second place, a notable change has taken place in the *type of religious experience* looked for in evangelism. This naturally follows the change in the basis of appeal. So long as evangelism was negative and fear-creating,

standard conversions were well-marked and signal. But such experiences have been on the decline, much to the alarm of those who do not see that the quieter experience may be just as genuine and even more so. In a questionnaire sent out on this subject to all ministers in charge of circuits in the Methodist Church in Ireland it was ascertained that as the vivid experience had decreased much more reality was apparent in the religious life of our young people. This is to be expected when conversion as such is no longer the end but only the means by which the soul enters into possession of the new life in Christ. It is clear that it is not the experience through which one passes at a particular time, no matter how vivid, that matters nearly so much as that to which such an experience should lead—the constant sense of God in Christ transforming the whole of life. One might very well have had a sudden, vivid experience and have been so much pre-occupied with it as afterwards to have missed the fuller experiences to which it should have led; he may indeed through all the years have been trusting in the *memory* of a conversion experience rather than in Christ as an abiding Presence. On the other hand, there are those who cannot recall any one vivid experience, but who have gradually come to know God in Christ for themselves, and religion for them consists in the sense of His presence and power continually. Such an abiding experience changes life and awakens the soul to new values. It matters little how it has come about. The important thing is that it is there and that it has made such a difference to life that “old things have passed away and all things have become new.”

It is difficult to convince people that there can be as much of God in the religious consciousness that has slowly developed as in the sudden experience. Instantaneous conversions involve the consciousness of something new and almost overwhelming. But this element of newness is not so readily discovered in the gradual experience. This is true, but of course one never realises how great the changes are that come gradually. Light is as much in contrast to darkness when it dawns so quietly that no one can tell the point at which darkness passes into light as if the one changed

suddenly into the other. So the religious experience may have as much of God in it when it is the result of a process as when it comes suddenly through a sudden act of faith. It is the possession and quality of the religious experience that counts and not the manner of its coming.

Conclusions of this kind account for the tendency to explore other methods of evangelism beside (or in addition to) those adopted in the traditional preaching mission. These latter did not take into account sufficiently *the value of intimate, personal dealing*. It assumed that all souls were alike and that, therefore, all could be helped by one and the same method. Modern evangelism is undoubtedly indebted to psychology at this point. Light has been thrown for all who have to do with education or evangelism on the importance of individual differences and the consequent need of treating individuals with the utmost discrimination.

What the evangelist, therefore, must have by way of equipment as much more fundamentally necessary than "a philosophy of the plan of salvation" are delicate tactfulness, psychological and spiritual insight, an unprejudiced and sympathetic mind, a clear understanding of the essentials of the Christian life; and all arising out of a personal experience so real that there can be no room in his work for questionable or secondary motives, but which bears him forward in passionate devotion to his Lord.

All the tendencies in present-day Methodism point to a type of evangelism less spectacular but more discriminating than our fathers adopted. This is manifesting itself in two ways: first, in the use of *preparation classes* for bringing young people definitely into the fellowship of Christ and His Church; secondly, in *evangelism through group fellowship*.

Preparation classes were initiated by Rev. William Corrigan in 1905, when he was Convener for Work Amongst the Young. They provide for special instruction for young people in Bible knowledge, the history and meaning of the Church, Christian discipleship and methods of devotion. At the age of sixteen all young people who have passed through these classes are asked to accept Christ as Saviour

if they have not already done so. Those who respond are then publicly received into the full membership of the Church.

These public services are proving of great spiritual value to the entire congregation as well as to those newly received, while the method of individual dealing which the preparation classes provide is making for a much more intelligent acceptance of Jesus than is possible in mass evangelism. Elsewhere the story of the origin and development of this youth movement in Methodism is fully told. Nothing is more important than the aim involved, which is to bring youth to Christ at the impressionable and vital years and to guide it into definite Christian service. Of course, much depends on those in charge of these classes. Often the leader is content to make instruction, rather than religious experience on the basis of instruction, his aim. This is not in harmony with the purpose for which the classes were instituted. The proof of their value for evangelism is that many of our best workers now at home and abroad owe their religious experience to the work faithfully done in these classes.

Evangelism through group fellowship—a method which is only now establishing itself in Irish Methodism—aims at doing for adults and those entering adult life what preparation classes are doing for young people. Group fellowship is in some respects a substitute for the class-meeting which has become practically extinct in Irish Methodism and is never likely to revive in its traditional form. The chief value of the class-meeting originally was the provision it made for the oversight and instruction of converts by experienced leaders. Gradually the class as a fellowship and means of religious training became merely a testimony meeting, and as testifying became mechanical the class ceased to be a spiritual force. Group fellowship provides all that made the class originally such a vital influence. It is a fellowship into which not only those who have been Christians enter, but also those who are seeking the experiences of the Christian life. Testifying is not absent in the fellowship group, but it comes spontaneously. The leader of the traditional class-meeting called on each member to testify, whether he was in the mood for doing so or not. In group fellowship

conversation develops around some topic that is vital to the Christian life. Members discuss this in the light of their own experience. Unconsciously in so doing they are both testifying and discovering the depths of their own Christian life. Reality as a consequence is coming back into the religious life of modern Methodism. Those who have been cradled in the Church and have been looked upon as Christians are discovering that their religious life has been very much of an inheritance, and in fellowship their faith is becoming more personal and vital.

The group movement began after the World War with a number of young Wesleyan ministers who were dissatisfied both with themselves and their Church. They met to air their grievances, but in fellowship they discovered sources of power that transformed both their lives and their ministry. The movement spread rapidly until in all parts of England and Ireland ministers were meeting regularly in fellowship. Two watchwords define the spirit and aims of the group—"The Quest" and "The Crusade." The object of the Quest is the "New Testament experience of God in Christ." The Crusade is the spontaneous expression of this experience in Christian service.

Inevitably a movement so vital began quickly to find its way into the membership of the Church. It has united the young women of Methodism in the Girls' League, and is beginning to organize Methodist young manhood in the Young Laymen's League. Already its influence is apparent in a growing sense of reality and an impatience with everything in Church life which savours of formality or mere cant. It desires above all things reality in religious experience rather than any particular type of religious experience. Its chief concern is to know the mind of Christ, to share His spirit and to enter intelligently into the service of the Kingdom. This is evangelism of the best type. It has merits that evangelism through special efforts lacks—(1) There is nothing sporadic in it; it goes on all the time. (2) Instead of creating a gush of emotion which is followed by reaction detrimental to the entire life of the Church, it spiritualises

and unites the emotional life, centering it and steadying it all in Christ as Saviour and friend. (3) It leads to a more deliberate and intelligent acceptance of Christ and the Christian way of life.

To sum up:—Methodist evangelism is increasingly concerned with youth within the Church. It knows that it is easier to win youth within the Church for Christ than to bring back the old and hardened sinner, or the respectable man of the world who has lost all interest in religion. It seems that the neglect of youth has in the past been the chief factor in creating the problem of the evangelism of the outsider, and that the best way to win the world for Christ is through the salvation of youth. So long as there is an outsider to win for Christ Methodism will have its special missions and its out-door evangelism. This is its genius. But it is increasingly concerned with the spiritual atmosphere into which the converted outsider is to be introduced. It believes, indeed, that if this atmosphere is all that it should be, apart from special effort, it will have a powerful attraction for the non-church-goer. It regards it therefore as the prime essential that the religion of Church members should be real, and it believes that this can be best secured through that fellowship which was the basis of the Church of the New Testament and of early Methodism. With the emphasis on youth and its evangelism, the whole question of conversion has had to undergo rethinking. It is obvious that for youth religious experience will differ in many respects from adult conversion. It will not be so vivid or revolutionary, but this should not detract from its genuineness. It is Christian experience as consisting predominantly in the constant Presence of Jesus that is all-important. It matters little whether such an experience begins suddenly or is entered upon gradually. The chief concern is that it should be an early experience and that in vital fellowship it should grow in richness and intensity as youth passes up to manhood and womanhood.

V

IRISH METHODISM AND WAR.

REV. R. H. FOSTER, B.A., D.C.M.

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet:
Lest we forget: lest we forget."

A DOZEN years after the greatest war in history, it is still difficult to dip one's pen in cool ink and write dispassionately about a subject which at one time seemed interwoven with life itself. One's outlook is naturally coloured by the experiences of the past, and memories of days and of comrades that are gone prevent writer and reader alike from being strictly impartial. It might be possible for some to give a cold catalogue of the bare facts of the last three decades, but, when one enters on the subject of Irish Methodism and War, two equally interesting points claim attention: the first—What Methodism *did* in wartime: the second—What Methodism *thought* of war: and this latter point brings us into the realm of controversy.

Furthermore, a considerable change has come over the views of the majority of folk on the whole question of war, and things which to-day give rise to ironical laughter were thought natural by our grandfathers. For example, during the Boer War our leading religious paper severely criticised the British Commander-in-Chief because he fought two important engagements on Sunday! It was plainly hinted that this in itself was sufficient to account for his defeats. Apparently it was considered permissible to trifle with the eighth Commandment, provided the letter of the fourth was unbroken! War is no longer a week-day occupation to be closed down like the family billiard room on Saturday night; in fact, the present laxity with regard to Sabbath observance is probably largely a legacy of the 1914-18 struggle. On the

other hand, the horrors of that war have helped materially in creating a public conscience, or sharpening the existing conscience with regard to war, and a purely aggressive quarrel is almost unthinkable amongst civilised races to-day.

When, therefore, we turn to review the events of the years immediately past, let us strive to do so with minds freed from the prejudices of our generation. If we have reached a further stage in the development on earth of the Kingdom which Christ came to establish, let us not forget that those who fought in 1914-18 did so in the belief that they were standing for all that was sacred, and they reckoned not their lives dear unto them so that Honour and Liberty might prevail. Not all were heroes: not all were saints: not all saw the same vision: many could not have put into words just what they did see and feel: and yet there were thousands of them who sensed in some definite way that The Cause for which they fought was right. They felt that The Cause must finally triumph, and if, in the fortune of the battle, some of them must fall, then each took his chance cheerfully and met Death with a smile. Even the irreligious had a kind of conviction that

"Right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win."

A son of one of our Manses lies sleeping somewhere on Vimy Ridge. In sunny days when all was bright he had been passionately fond of music, and had composed, amongst other things, a haunting air to "Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go." That hymn is his memorial to-day. We think of him, and of many of his chums, as going forth to that ghastly struggle in the spirit of that hymn: it was where Jesus led, and they followed undaunted. Let not the most ardent pacifist criticise their motives, but give thanks that, because of their sacrifice, a welter of blood and tears has been touched with the glory of the Divine, and the light of a new day of God has already irradiated the hill-tops.

The hideousness of Sin was never so apparent till it brought the Son of God to Calvary; and War showed its revolting face most clearly when, on many a hillside—The

Somme, Beaumont-Hamel, Paschendale, Gallipoli—a hundred crosses threw their dread shadows across our firesides. Then we saw men raised to heights of immortal self-sacrifice, while the baser wallowed in pollution. Then we felt the fierceness of the burning fiery furnace in which some were consumed like the chaff while others came forth as pure gold. And we knew that the slaughter and the sorrow were only worth while if out of the darkness would dawn a new era in which nation should not lift up the sword against nation, neither should they learn war any more.

"I gave him that his sacrifice might bear
The fruit of growing Peace all down the years;
I gave him that no Mother in despair
Might weep these tears."

But that was the spirit of 1919. Let us first go back a score of years, to the time when war was still pictured as scarlet-coated valour marching behind the rolling drum.

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The twentieth century opened in war, but it was a dispute which did not touch Ireland or Irish Methodism very closely. It is true that certain Irish regiments, such as the Dublin Fusiliers, distinguished themselves sufficiently to be lauded in popular song. South Africa, however, was too far off for this country to be intensely interested, and also, there existed a kind of feeling that the struggle was one for Her Majesty's regular army, and at that time it contained but few Methodists. A few volunteered, but their action was generally regarded much as if they had joined a gold rush in Klondyke: they were adventurers: we wished them well, and hoped they would return with glory.

Apart from a few personal anxieties, Methodist interest in the war was largely confined to two points of National, rather than of Denominational, importance. Was Britain to blame for the war? Having early satisfied itself that the war was forced on Britain by the unyielding arrogance of the Dutch, Methodism then merely wondered how soon the "Soldiers of the Queen"—(My boys!)—would teach these Boers a lesson. Naturally the victories, the defeats, and the

sieges were followed by all in Ireland, and such names as Colenso, Modder River, Ladysmith, Spion Kop and Mafeking linger in the memory still. At the time, however, interest in them was much what it is at a Rugby International to-day: the spectators follow the game keenly; they applaud or groan, show their appreciation or their disgust, but they never dream of entering the field of play to join in the game. Their country's reputation is at stake, but it is the job of the picked men to defend or enhance it. So Ireland sang patriotic or sentimental songs, and waited for victory.

At length the long-expected triumph came, and the khaki-clad warriors returned. The strains of "Dolly Gray" and "We'll hang Paul Kruger" were heard no more: the boys exchanged their badges of "Bobs" and Buller and White for marbles and birds' eggs: the adventurers who came back settled down to civilian life again: everything became normal, and Methodism, except in a few places, ceased to take any further interest in things military.

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There followed a dozen years of peace. During that time some of the Irish Methodist ministers were in contact with soldiers in the various garrison towns, though the Methodists in the army were very largely Englishmen. At the Curragh Camp a full-time acting Chaplain represented Methodism, and at Queenstown Rev. Thomas Moran became known to all as the Sailors' Friend. He acted as Chaplain to all British men-o'-war coming into the Southern Irish waters. In the bigger cities, and also in centres such as Athlone, Clonmel, Fermoy, and other towns, work was maintained amongst the troops, but the work at the Curragh was by far the most important of all. Associated with that Camp must be mentioned the names of Rev. J. Dwyer Kelly and Rev. W. Jasper Robinson, B.A., especially. Under their active leadership new premises were erected, new lines of service undertaken, and our Church and Soldiers' Home there became an important landmark in the lives of many in passing regiments. The facilities offered in the Home were the means of drawing many young lads from evil company, and it was no strange

sight to see the large church there well filled with "Tommies" for a Sunday evening voluntary service. One of the present ministers of the Irish Methodist Church was first brought forward as a Local Preacher by Rev. W. J. Robinson while stationed with his unit at the Curragh Camp.

In addition to their regular activities in the camps and garrisons, the Chaplains sometimes followed the troops on their manœuvres, finding opportunity amidst the novelty of camping-out to introduce special services and lectures in unaccustomed places. The echoes of the Glen Imaal and the woods of the Queen's County have thus been roused by songs which they seem hardly likely to hear again, but Irish Methodism may look back on those years with the assurance that, when the opportunity was given to her, she discharged her trust faithfully.

Then came 1914.

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Amongst the many peoples and things which are blamed for the war, the Churches have not escaped criticism, and it may be that war might have been avoided if everyone had been a sincere follower of Christ. Yet even amidst the professed and devout followers of the Lord there were not a few who thought, with Longfellow, that

"War is a terrible trade, yet, in the cause that
is righteous
Sweet is the smell of powder. . . ."

"Better a hundred years of war," said a leading Irish Methodist minister—"better a century of war than that the Prussian idea of Statecraft should prevail." In April, 1914, when a petty feud had developed in the Near East, the "Advocate," in a leading article, said: "No doubt war is a horrible and inhuman thing, but. . .," and as long as the war kept far enough away, the attitude of many prominent men was rather that of the comic song:—

"I don't care if the ship goes down,
For it doesn't belong to me."

In the beginning of 1914, when the political situation in Ulster was rapidly becoming acute, a famous English ex-President said:

"If they are at last thrust into a corner, we should be ashamed of them as Non-conformists if they did not resist to the last extremity. . . . If the Russians burnt Moscow rather than submit to the tyranny of Napoleon. . . will not our Irish brethren be justified in going through fire and water in resisting a despotism which is worse than either?"

Such attitudes are much more open to criticism to-day, for in the meantime Science has made two great advances—one notable, the other notorious.

The first advance is in the realm of intercommunication: aeroplane and wireless are throwing ever closer girdles round the Earth: the nations, whether they desire it or no, are being drawn into daily contacts. Consequently the various countries are getting to know each other better; to know each other's point of view, and, in a measure, to respect it. Also, most nations desire to stand well in the opinion of the others who form the great whispering gallery of the World. As recently as 1914 this was not the case: the nations were largely hemmed in by their own boundaries, and opinions from the outer world drifted in more slowly, and were not so carefully heeded. Science has helped to make plain the path of the Peacemaker by helping us to understand each other better.

The critic should also bear in mind the notorious progress which has been made in the armaments of War. A recent writer has characterised the Somme battle of July, 1916, as the great watershed which divided ancient and glorious encounter from modern "mechanised Hell." There is something to be said for his theory. No doubt the vastness of the scale of slaughter, coupled with the conditions under which the armies fought, turned even some toughened militarists against the blind butchery of up-to-date Armageddons. Men lived like rats in the stinking holes of the earth, only

to be maimed and dismembered by the crash of a shell from an unseen foeman's gun half-a-dozen miles away; or to die as raving madmen, cursing the poisoned air; or they sunk into the depths with bubbling groan, as beneath the mirror of God's blue sea there slunk away the chuckling submarine: and men said, "This is not War. This is Hell." It was conditions such as these which caused men to realise how utterly opposed to the spirit of the New Testament war is, and in desperation they began to look round for some less fiendish alternative. What thrills of horror swept over Belfast when the "Lusitania" went down! And the same horrible cry of shame went up from Dublin when the "Leinster" was lost.

But in 1914 things looked different. At the threshold of America's White House stood the man who was destined to sound the herald-note of a better day; but, as yet, those who sought an alternative to war were inarticulate, and "Ultima Ratio" was inscribed, metaphorically, on the dummy rifles of the Ulster Volunteers. It is true that "Arbitration" had been mentioned in some quarters as far back as the outbreak of the South African War, but it was rejected largely because the integrity of the Court of Arbitration was not beyond question. International ethics have to keep pace with National morality. Earlier than that, Immanuel Kant in his essay on "Eternal Peace" had suggested a peaceful Federation of States, but the idea was not taken up: those who had survived former wars soon forgot the blood in the glory, and those who paid war's toll in full had no voice to speak from the grave. The World had to go through the pangs of those four terrible years before a Studdert Kennedy could voice the feelings of millions in these simple, yet penetrating, words:

"That chap in 'Soldiers Three' was about right:

'Says Mooney, I declare,
The death is everywhere;

But the glory never seems to be about.'

War is only glorious when you buy it in the *Daily Mail* and enjoy it at the breakfast table. It goes splendidly with bacon and eggs. Real war is the final limit of damnable brutality, and that's all there is in it."

To-day the spirit of The Peacemaker, as exemplified in the League of Nations, has given a new outlook to a war-torn and weary world; but we are dealing here with the days preceding all that: and now, back to the facts.

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The actual danger of war did not greatly alarm the Methodists. Lord Roberts was doing his best to stir up the nation to see the possibility of a struggle with a foreign power in the immediate future, but, like the majority of the British, the Irish Methodists remained apathetic. They were, indeed, much more interested in the probability of a tussle within the narrow limits of their own island.

The Board of Examiners met, as usual, in Dublin in May, and that afternoon there strolled down Grafton Street two of the successful candidates.

"I must go and see Mr. Budd," said No. 1, "to see if I should buy my discharge from the army."

"Why?" asked No. 2. "Are you in the army?"

"Yes, I'm on the Reserve, and if war were to break out anywhere within the next two years I might be called up. But I can buy myself out if I wish."

"Oh," said No. 2, "keep your money! What war is going to break out within two years!" Within three months the first speaker, Rev. J. A. Boullier, was serving with his Battery in France.

When the Sarajevo tragedy occurred, the Conference members had gone back to their respective spheres of labour, and Methodism neither had, nor strove to have, any authoritative voice, but from letters and notes in the press of that time may be gathered some impression of the trend of opinion. The "Advocate" of July 31st sounds terribly callous, yet no protest was raised against the remark that, "If it is possible to confine to war to the simple issue, and to the restricted locality, no great harm can accrue." When Earl Grey had vainly made his last effort to avoid a conflict, when the irrevocable step had been taken and the troops were already being mobilised, Methodism was exhorted to pray "that God may go forth with our Army and Navy and grant

them success." When the war was ten days old a note appears which, in the light of after events, seems particularly ludicrous: "The war still continues, with all its waste and all its horrors." And it "still continued" for about 1,500 days more! Most men had entirely failed to realise that the world was in for a struggle of gigantic proportions and seemingly interminable length.

Things stirred more rapidly in Belfast than elsewhere, and before the end of a month certain prominent men, lay and clerical, were voicing public opinion on platform and in the press, in aid of recruiting. A leader of the Methodist Church, who afterwards gave three sons to the army, stated that "not all war was wrong. Christianity never came into conflict with true Patriotism." Another, equally well known, announced that "War is a kind of purgatory. It is a painful, but salutary remedy for softness, slackness and sensuality." Needless to state, with such words for their encouragement, the young men flocked to the colours, and many ministers asked for Chaplaincies. But these were the acts of individuals, and the Church was slow to make any definite pronouncement; in fact, when the Synods met in September, only the Dublin Synod formulated a public resolution on the subject, and that was, that "the best service to the State is for the Church to go on faithfully and strenuously with her proper work." The question of the taking up of arms was left to the individual conscience. "Mrs. Charity Hope"—so frequently progressive in outlook—shortly afterwards suggested a line of action more akin to the Quaker attitude, and appealed for the formation of Relief Societies—"to give ourselves to the service of the sorrowing children of men."

About the same time, Mr. J. A. Duncan, a prominent layman in the South, endeavoured to gather together into one company all Irish Methodist lads who would send him their names before enlisting. This, indeed, would soon have become impracticable, from the standpoint of numbers alone, but the idea was not followed up, for many preferred to join local regiments, or to go to units in which they already had friends. Ireland's love for medicine was shewn by the number of Irishmen in the R.A.M.C., some of them holding

high rank. The cavalry appealed to others, and the North Irish and South Irish Horse had many recruits, although neither troop saw any serious fighting while mounted.

Many were the anomalies and strange coincidences of those days, and Methodists shared in them to the full. One, with some taste for medicine, spent his first war-Christmas "somewhere in France" in charge of a Bath-house, dealing with what the Government called "one of the minor horrors of war"—in Latin it is called *Pediculus vestimentorum*! A missionary candidate, who had but recently said "Ninety-nine" to the satisfaction of the old family doctor, found himself serving in the ranks in a unit of which the doctor's son was the Colonel. A son of the manse, nurtured in the itinerancy and in business, joined up to do his bit, and the authorities thought that his bit was to buy hay for the army horses: it is certain that the horses knew more about the hay than he did!

The first winter dragged slowly through, and gradually the conviction gained ground that, "in the cause that is righteous," it was legitimate—nay, obligatory—to engage to the fullest of one's physical powers. By the time that Conference came round there was only a minority which dared to deny that, in the circumstances, the normal business of even the Church must take second place. The matter came fully into the open when some of the theological students sought permission to join up. The minority, like most minorities, held its convictions firmly, and led by a fearless and "bonny fighter"—Rev. Wm. Crawford—contended that if a man had once felt himself called to the work of the Methodist Church in Ireland, he could not be called of Kitchener to another warfare. Besides, ministers were men of Peace. The debate was keen, but it seemed as if the students were going to get their desire. "At any rate," said one minister, "the case of Brother X. is clear: he definitely asks permission to join a non-combatant unit." "That makes no difference at all," said the opposition; "the R.A.M.C. are just as bad as the rest, for it is their duty to patch up the wounded so that they may get back as quickly as possible into the fight! The non-combatants are just as bad as the fighters!" After a

long debate, however, the majority in the students' favour was a substantial one, and thenceforward the position of the Church was clear. When "Brother X." did subsequently volunteer he found the R.A.M.C. temporarily closed, and was offered a position as a butcher in the Army Service Corps!

Meantime many circuits had found themselves drawn into various activities on behalf of the troops, and the congregations in many towns were giving generously of their time, and their goods, to brighten life for lads in the training camps or the hospitals. Bangor, for Clandeboye; Dundrum, for Ballykinlar; Antrim; Longford; Ballyshannon, for Finnar; Clonmel; Derry; Cork; Fermoy and other centres were steadily busy, while Dublin and Belfast had special opportunities of service. The records of these kindnesses show a truly enormous amount of energy and self-sacrifice on the part of many who were prevented, by age or otherwise, from more active participation in the struggle. A word of praise is due here to the Dublin Methodist Council, a body which is usually alert, and fruitful both in ideas and in means to carry them out. It shewed its vitality at various times during the war by its discussions on "live" topics connected with the existing conditions, but nothing which the Council did was more useful or far-reaching than its inauguration of Social Work amongst the troops in the city. In one respect Dublin was in a more advantageous position than other centres, in that, owing to the Easter Rising of 1916, the locality was strongly garrisoned by English soldiers, and naturally many of them were Nonconformists. If, therefore, Dublin is singled out for special mention, it is partly to indicate how Dublin Methodism availed of a magnificent opportunity, and partly because what was done in Dublin was paralleled in lesser degree by many an outside congregation.

Taking over the Abbey Street Lecture Hall and adjoining premises, the Council's Special Committee opened in May, 1916, the "Soldiers' Rendezvous," which filled a worthy place for three years in the city's life. Towards the end, an average of 1,000 meals a day was reached, and both in 1917 and 1918 Christmas dinner was partaken of there by 1,400 men in uniform. The Rendezvous also provided Reading, Writing,

Cloak-room and Recreation facilities for the men, and concerts were given weekly during the autumn and winter months. As the Rendezvous was non-sectarian, no direct religious activities were undertaken, but in adjoining rooms meetings of the "Guild" and "Brotherhood" type were regularly conducted. The Secretary of State for War singled out Mrs. W. M. Elliott and Mrs. Bagnall for special recognition in connection with the Abbey Street work, and thus gave some expression of appreciation to the 600 voluntary lady workers from the Dublin churches who, at one time or another, or all the time, had assisted these two leaders in making the work the success which it proved to be.

Not far distant, in College Street, a splendid bit of work was done by the "Soldiers' Club," over which the presiding genius was Mr. A. M. Fullerton, another name held in honour throughout Methodism. This spot was a "Home from Home" for many thousands of lads, and its accommodation, its facilities, its games, its clean and tempting food, proved the means of gathering to its sheltering portals young lives surrounded by the constant perils of a wartime city. Close to the centre of Dublin, the Club became a hive of glorious industry, where garrison and mobile troops had the advantage of first-class attention at reasonable cost. Many an anxious parent in England and elsewhere had reason to bless these Methodist enterprises, and the workers received the gratitude of thousands, both of Tommies and their relatives. The knowledge that he deserves thoroughly his place in the Order of the British Empire must be pleasing, but the knowledge that he has outmanœuvred the Devil in countless conflicts for young men's souls must give even greater pleasure to Mr. Fullerton, and to those hundreds throughout the country who have done a similar work.

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As the war progressed many circuits found themselves in difficulties about services and pastoral oversight, for several ministers had gone out as Chaplains, the Students were mostly serving in one capacity or another, and the Conference in 1918 refused to take any more candidates into its work.

The position, indeed, of these candidates was an anomalous one, for the Conference technically accepted them, but refused to allocate them during the continuance of the war. This was done to give them a status, and to set its seal upon their suitability, but also in deference to the country's urgent need for men in the fighting line. This had been suggested a year earlier, but had not been acted upon then. Of course, the arrangement was criticised: it was scarcely to be expected that all the thousands of Irish Methodists would hold precisely the same views with regard to the relative importance of Church and State, and for every piece of new (wartime) legislation there was sure to be found a critic! Many circuits put up with makeshift arrangements; curtailment of services was the solution elsewhere, and in a few places working agreements with other denominations helped churches to carry on until the great day of Peace should come. In all, during the full period of the war, some twenty-four Chaplains were sent out, though these did not all serve at the same time, and some of them served only for short terms. In addition, some men were released for work with the Y.M.C.A. or kindred body. Considering the number of ministers in the home work whose time was largely taken up with garrison duties, it would not be an exaggeration to state that our Church carried on during the closing period of the war with roughly only three-quarters of its normal ministry. The majority of the Chaplains were attached to outside units, mostly English, but Rev. W. J. Robinson served for twenty months with the Ulster Division, and—when he had to go into hospital—was followed by Rev. J. A. Boullier, who had been granted a commission after several months in the ranks. Rev. J. Dwyer Kelly attained his Majority, and filled an important administrative position with the army in France.

The old controversy of Church v. State raised its head again as month after month went by and the long-hoped-for Peace seemed as far off as ever. The nation, in the forceful words of Sir Douglas Haig, realised that its back was to the wall, and in some quarters the idea of a normal Conference in Cork was deprecated. "To what purpose this waste?" was the cry of the ardent Imperialists. "Let us cut down

our expenditure by holding a small Conference in Dublin." It was also suggested that a large amount of money could thus be saved and given to various Relief organisations, or to the Victory Loan. Conference *was* held in Cork, but was smaller than usual and was curtailed two days. Another stirring was caused by raising the question of ministerial changes of stations, some holding that all removals should be held over until after the war. An emergency measure setting aside the itinerant system *pro tem*. was passed by Parliament in 1917, but in the following year it was felt that, in fairness to all, a certain number of changes had become imperative. In all these points the Conference strove to do its duty both to the Nation and to the members of the Church; there was no undue bowing to militarism, nor was there in any place unconcern for the welfare of the country in its hours of crisis. Looking back now, when the passions and prejudices of the moment are almost buried for ever, in the calmer light of peaceful days, Irish Methodism may well be proud of her consistent and reasonable attitude throughout, due undoubtedly to the guiding influence of the Spirit of God in all her deliberations.

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It is impossible to ascertain with accuracy the number of her sons and daughters who joined the colours or took active part in the struggle, but it can be said without fear of contradiction that, in proportion to its numbers, the Church has an exceedingly creditable record of service. Not only were there representatives in Irish regiments, and especially in the Ulster Division and in the Pals Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers, but the Black Watch, the Engineers, the Medical Corps, and other units had their quota, and many served in the Navy and Air Force. Nor do we forget those who came back to help the Motherland from overseas, of whom a very large number were with the Canadian infantry. No distinction, of course, was made in the War Office records between Irish and other Methodists, so statistics are not available, but the tablets in the porches of such churches as Thomas Street, Portadown; Stephen's Green, Dublin, and Wesley

Chapel, Cork, to-day are fair indications of the loyal response of our men and women to the call of Honour and the Flag. Wesley College has in its Memorial Chapel the names of 85 Old Boys who fell, and the Methodist College sent out 384 of its sons, of whom 81 did not return.

A record was attempted of the sons of ministers serving, and this list, while probably not entirely accurate or exhaustive, betokens the remarkable loyalty of that section of the Church. It may have been that none of them was required to carry on the family business of farm or shop, but, whatever the explanation, it was stated at the Conference of 1917, that if all Irishmen had enlisted in the same proportion to their numbers, an army of half a million Irishmen would already have been in the field. The actual figure was probably about one-quarter of that. It was also stated at the Cork Conference that sons of over one hundred of our Ministers were in uniform. Where that figure was obtained is unknown, but another calculation shows that at the end of the war at least 115 sons of Ministers had enlisted, involving 70 Manses, and, of these, 25 made the great sacrifice. In three instances an only son was faithful even unto death: on another day two boys from one Manse fell together: another Manse lost its younger son that day, and his brother is "missing", out East. And what was happening in the Manses was happening in the homes of all. The business-man, carrying on "till the boys come home," found himself without a son to perpetuate the name; the farmer had to hire outsiders for the tasks which his own strong lads should have come home to fulfil; and many a promising professional career was untimely cut short. We reaped our share of the honours, but we paid our share of the price. One did not know whether to welcome or to dread the postman's knock and the call of the telegraph-boy. Was it to say: "I am quite well" or "Coming on leave to-morrow," or was it to say "The War Office regrets. . . ." ? Yes, Irish Methodism passed through all the experiences into which war plunges the community. At one time it was resolved to send a small deputation of Ministers to visit the lads in France, but, after the names had been selected, the

War Office did not see its way to granting facilities, and the matter ended there.

Many were the prayers that went up from our churches in the fateful early days of November, 1918, and the sun shone out at last from behind the clouds when the Armistice was concluded and the last shot fired at 11 a.m. on November 11th.

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Demobilisation proceeded rapidly. In accordance with a Government scheme, all men had to give the name of the congregation to which they were (or ought to be) attached, and this, in some circuits, brought our Ministers into touch with many returning soldiers. Some there were whose only connexion with Methodism seemed to be that they had been baptised by a Methodist parson twenty or thirty years before; or married in a Methodist Church! But we are not military-minded, and except for the presence of a few Chaplains still in uniform at the Conference of 1919, we had well-nigh put behind us all the outer manifestations of military connexion. We still have our representatives with the army in the Bombay District of India, but they—like the Chaplains who serve the garrison towns at home—are all officially civilians.

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One further matter ought to be mentioned before we conclude our military history for this quarter-century, and that is the position of Methodists during what we call the "Irish War." Not only had we had enough of war to last us a lifetime, but we had no sympathy with violence, or the achievement of any political status by non-constitutional methods.

The result was that in many places the Methodist people were passive sufferers in the disorders and struggles which rent our country in 1921. Many Southern and Western families left our shores as a direct result of these criminal activities, and are now settled in the South of England, and elsewhere. We stood for Law—British Law—as long as England was constitutionally our ruler, and, on the changes of 1923, our people almost without exception stood for loyalty

to the newly-constituted Governments of Ireland. Loyalty is sometimes costly, but our Ministers never flinched in their duties to the English Non-conformist troops quartered in Ireland during "the troubles," and when British soldiers were shot down at our church door in Fermoy it was the Minister's wife who first tended them, when every other door in the street was closed in terror. We want to forget those days. Would that we could wipe out 1914 and the years that followed! But we cannot: so we pray that

"No more shall host encountering host
Disturb the peaceful years";

and we hold our heads erect in the consciousness that (in the words of Tommy Atkins), when the need arose, "We did our bit."

VI

IRISH METHODISM AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

REV. J. E. NEILL, B.A.

THE connection of Irish Methodism with foreign missionary work may be divided into two clearly defined periods; the period of the pioneers and that of later days—the last forty years. The first synchronizes more or less with the period of Dr. Coke's influence and ends about 1830; the latter begins about 1890 and continues to the present day. During the intervening sixty years there is no evidence that any considerable number of ministers from the Irish Conference volunteered for foreign work. But in the decade 1890-1900 influences were gathering strength which in course of time led to a fresh response to the world call. The spirit of the Student Christian Movement began to be felt in our Colleges. Irish ministers were allowed to volunteer as members of their own Conference without having to seek a transfer to the British Conference. Women's work in the East began to make a new appeal to the womanhood of the Home Church. The result has been that once again men and women from Irish Methodism are to be found working side by side in almost every mission field with their brethren and sisters from Britain. We have no special field of our own, nor is there any desire for one. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society offers ample opportunity for all our workers, and its Irish Auxiliary keeps interest alive at home.

The first period will occupy the greater part of the space allotted to us; less need be said about later days, because though richly fertile in devotion and adventure, many of the workers are still alive and would wish the Church to wait for an estimate of their work until that work is done. Without further preamble we may therefore pass to our study of the men who first went out from Ireland.

Dr. Findlay in his history of the Wesleyan Missionary Society says that "Ireland was Dr. Coke's chief recruiting ground." That great missionary pioneer paid twenty-five visits to Ireland and frequently presided at the Annual Conference. Seldom did his passionate appeals for volunteers pass without response. At the Conference of 1786 he secured William Hammett for Nova Scotia; later in the year they and two others from the English Conference set sail; a storm in the Atlantic drove them not to their desired haven, but to Antigua in the West Indies, and thus by what seemed the misfortune of a hurricane at sea the story of Ireland's first foreign missionary work among people of another race began. The West Indies must therefore claim our attention for a while.

THE PERIOD OF THE PIONEERS. THE WEST INDIES

The storm that drove Dr. Coke and his comrades to the island of Antigua could hardly have landed them in a more favourable spot; it was the one island in the West Indies in which Methodism had found a footing. An Irish Local Preacher and his family who had been connected with our Church in Waterford had at an earlier date sailed for Virginia, but a storm had driven them to Antigua. This man had assisted two devoted lay workers, Mr. Baxter and Mrs. Gilbert, in work amongst the negroes. When Dr. Coke and his companions arrived on Christmas Day, 1786, and were walking up the street of St. John, they met the Local Preacher on his way to service and accompanied him. The news of the strangers' arrival soon spread, and both white and black inhabitants of the town crowded to the service. Dr. Coke discovered that owing to the efforts of these lay folk nearly two thousand had been enrolled as members of the Society. In writing of the visit, he says of the services in St. John's Chapel: "Our Society in this island is near 2,000; but the ladies and gentlemen of the town have so filled the house that the poor dear negroes who built it have been almost shut out, except in the mornings, and yet they bear this not only with patience but with joy."

However keen might be the disappointment in Nova Scotia regarding Dr. Coke's failure to arrive—and he could not cable the explanation!—he felt that all the men he brought were needed in the West Indies. As he toured among the islands the appeal of the work grew upon him. Thus it was that WILLIAM HAMMETT, who had set sail for Nova Scotia, found himself the first Irish Methodist Missionary in the West Indies. Soon he was followed by a succession of his brethren from Ireland, who like himself rendered noble service. In several of the islands Hammett did splendid work; he was an able preacher and an energetic worker. At times he had to labour under the pressure of bitter persecution, for many of the planters and European settlers began to think that the religion which would make their slaves better men and women might not serve their own selfish purposes. The time soon came when our missionaries found themselves engaged in a long and strenuous struggle on behalf of the negroes. That story would require a chapter to itself. Suffice it to say that our workers bore an honourable part in it, and the day came when the slaves were free.

On one of his later visits Dr. Coke found Hammett "worn to a skeleton." Ill health compelled him to retire to the United States. Dr. Findlay says "he deserves to be honoured as the founder of West Indian Methodism."

When visiting Ireland at the Conference of 1788, Dr. Coke secured WILLIAM MCCORNOCK, "a powerful preacher with a passion for souls," and appointed him to Dominica. In six months he succumbed to the unfavourable climate, leaving behind him a treasured memory of devoted service. On his third voyage to the West Indies Dr. Coke brought with him from Ireland THOMAS WORRELL and JAMES LYONS. Within two years the former had died and the latter had resigned. "Casualties, both physical and moral," we are told, "were heavy in those days."

Another ten years passed before Dr. Coke found at the Irish Conference of 1798 two fresh volunteers in WILLIAM STURGEON and JOHN STEVENSON. The former after eight years of faithful service died in 1806; the latter was appointed to Bermuda and was the subject of stormy opposition. Taking

advantage of the recent (1798) rebellion in Ireland, an attempt was made to stir up amongst British loyalists ill-favour against the Irishman. The Governor was importuned to forbid Stevenson's landing when the ship arrived, and it looked as if mob law was going to prevail. A magistrate appeared on the scene, who said, "There are many things imported into Bermuda that will put more evil into their minds than he will. One puncheon of rum will do more in this way than ever he will do all the days of his life! And if he has a good *method* with him I am sure we want him here; and therefore we will not banish him till we hear him." He was allowed to land and the Governor approved his credentials. Thus John Stevenson began his work. He preached sometimes with the fidelity of an Old Testament prophet. Opposition grew strong and Stevenson found himself arraigned before a magistrate, who referred the case to the Governor; the Governor regarded the matter so seriously that he summoned the Legislature, and a bill was passed "forbidding persons not invested with holy orders according to the rites of the Church of England from acting as preachers." Stevenson stood his ground and continued to preach. A warrant was issued for his arrest and he and a friend in whose house he had held a service found themselves in prison; after some delay they were released to await their trial. When it took place Stevenson was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, consigned to the common gaol of Hamilton, and condemned to pay the costs of the trial. When five weeks of his imprisonment had passed the Governor offered him freedom on condition that he would leave the islands. Declining the offer, he remained until the expiry of his sentence. In prison he sang Wesley's hymns and conversed about spiritual things with all who came his way. But he came out with his health seriously impaired. In 1802 he was forced to return to Ireland, and for one year he tried to "travel" at home, but had to retire. He died in 1819.

It is well that we should know what some of these men suffered, both in body and in mind, in laying the foundations of our Church in foreign lands; in those days their enemies were of their own colour and origin. It requires imagination

to picture what they went through both from climate and persecution; medical science had not made the discoveries which render life in these later days tolerable in the tropics; and where recognition, however mild, meets the missionary to-day, suspicion and opposition often met them then. The recorder can do little more than mention their names; imagination may perhaps dwell for a moment on the heroism of their service.

Two other missionaries, WILLIAM JENKIN and JOHN TAYLOR, sailed for the West Indies about the same time as Sturgeon and Stevenson. Crookshank in the History of Irish Methodism does not mention them as having been set aside at the previous Conference of 1798; nor does he make any subsequent reference to them, except to describe their shipwreck off the Old Head of Kinsale and their kindly treatment by a Roman Catholic priest and a friendly family. There is no reference in the history of the Missionary Society to Jenkin's being in the West Indies, but several references are made to John Taylor, whom we presume to be the shipwrecked Irishman who proceeded by a later boat. He is spoken of as a man of entire simplicity and consistency of character and specially beloved in the West Indian churches.

In 1804, four brethren were set apart at the Irish Conference for foreign work—two of them for the West Indies. One was JOHN RUTLEDGE, "a capable and painstaking preacher," who gave ten years' service to the islands as a minister and would have given more had it not been for a somewhat strange happening. Owing to ill-health he retired for a while, intending to resume work on recovery. Meantime his wife involuntarily had come into possession of a number of slaves. She and her husband proposed "to free them gradually upon a carefully considered plan, as the legal instrument conveying them to her did not permit of her manumitting them immediately." The Missionary Committee in England could not agree to the arrangement, and much to the regret of those who knew him in the islands, Rutledge resigned in 1814. It is to his credit that he continued to render service to the Church as a layman; his house was always a home to his former brethren in the ministry, and

the friendliest relations existed between him and them. He died highly respected in 1826. JAMES MORRISON, the missionary who came out with him, died after a career of useful, though troubled, service lasting for about three years.

JAMES KNOWLAN came to strengthen the staff in Jamaica early in 1807. He is described as "a vigorous, thoughtful, and able young preacher." His name is intimately connected with the long-sustained struggle for freedom. Methodism was proving only too successful, and legislation was instigated here as elsewhere to limit its progress. The "white society of Jamaica let loose its wrath" against the missionaries. In the midst of the struggle Knowlan fell into ill-health and had to be transferred to Nova Scotia, where we shall hear more of him later.

JOHN WIGGINS followed Knowlan to Jamaica, and soon only he, as yet a probationer, and George Johnson, an Englishman just out of his probation, were the only missionaries left in the island. It is said of these two men that "they were wise beyond their years; both were humble and faithful shepherds of Christ's flock; they worked in hearty fellowship. To Wiggins especially, who remained eight years on the island, the salvation of Methodism in Jamaica must be ascribed." In 1818 he returned to Ireland so broken in health that he had to rest for eight years. He then resumed work and, after a useful career at home, died in 1858. Before he left Jamaica the battle for religious liberty was practically won.

Another who rendered signal service was JAMES HORNE, a young soldier who had been led to Christ under the preaching of Gideon Ouseley, one of Ireland's great evangelists. He went to Jamaica in 1817 and travelled in the islands for thirty-five years. In his ministry he witnessed "continuous and permanent revival." We find him transferred from place to place where a man of vigour and devotion was required. Thus in the Bahamas and in Bermuda as well as in Jamaica he exercised an influential ministry. During four years of his ministry in Bermuda the membership was trebled, and a number of young men brought into the Church under his influence became well-known ministers and missionaries.

In quieter days he was enabled to reap harvests from the seed that John Stevenson and others had sown in stormier times.

JAMES EDNEY is not mentioned in Crookshank's History of Methodism, though in most instances that writer is careful to note those who go to other lands. Edney had a long and honourable career on the Mission Field. He spent fourteen years in Jamaica, four in other parts of the West Indies, then five in West Africa, and a final seven in his old field. "Affectionate earnestness, quiet zeal and patient perseverance" were his distinguishing characteristics. To have survived for so long a time the undermining influences of a tropical climate betokens a strong body. If not a man of outstanding ability he was a devoted worker. He had the spirit of a pioneer, and in addition to his other service, was responsible for the development of our work in Belize.

In the records of Missionary work, missionaries' wives are not as often mentioned as they ought to be. There is no need to compare their service with that of their husbands or with that of other women workers, yet what would the Mission Field be without the homes they maintain? Often the missionary's home, its children and its quiet influences are an integral part of the Christian message to the district in which they are placed. Moreover, their wives in spare hours do much valuable, if unrecorded, work; not seldom do they initiate work which in course of time grows to such dimensions that the Women's Department has to take it over and provide women workers. Let the tribute which has been paid to James Edney's wife stand for that to many others who must remain unmentioned: "She was a gifted lady who made herself a power by her husband's side."

WILLIAM COOPER and WILLIAM WILSON were both "reserved for Foreign Missions" at the Conference of 1811. The former died within a year of his arrival in the West Indies. He is amongst those who have given themselves to the work abroad with full purpose of heart, whose sacrifice is accepted for their service; they are judged not by what

they have achieved, but by their will to serve. In the cemeteries of the Mission Field are to be found many tombstones erected to those who died an early death. It is well to pause awhile to do them honour. William Wilson gave himself lavishly, perhaps unwisely. At the end of six years he, too, had finished his work. One fellow-worker speaking of him writes thus: "He will not be prevailed upon either by the doctor or myself to take care of himself, which he ought." Another writes: "I never knew a more conscientious, upright, steady, punctual man." Completely broken in health, he returned home—to die two years after his arrival.

JOHN BARRY was one of the fruits of a revival conducted in Bandon by William Richey, a preacher well known in the South of Ireland. In course of time he entered the ministry and in the later twenties we find him a missionary in Jamaica. He "wielded a keen and effective pen" and made much use of it in the columns of a friendly paper in the struggle for emancipation. He was prosecuted for libel by the editor of one of the leading papers in the island. He pleaded his own case in court and won it. It was said of him that he had the skill of an accomplished barrister. More than once false charges were made against him and his fellow-missionaries. On one occasion they were charged with wilful and corrupt perjury. After a full hearing the indictment was quashed. It was open to the missionaries to retaliate and turn the charge upon their enemies, but they were content to let their attitude in the struggle speak for itself.

On the Mission Field the question is seldom asked to what nationality a man belongs. He is judged by his character, his spirit and his work. To appreciate fully the work of the men we have mentioned and others yet to be mentioned who did the pioneer work of their different spheres, we would require to see them in their full setting along with their brethren from England and Scotland. The honours of the Mission Field do not belong to those of any one country. We have singled these out not because they were greater or better than their brethren of the British Conference, but because they were Irishmen.

NEWFOUNDLAND, NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA

We must now pass from the islands in the tropics to the rigours of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. We have already seen that William Hammett was destined for one of these spheres, but failed to arrive and found himself in the West Indies. Other Irishmen, however, did arrive.

The first was LAURENCE COUGHLAN, a convert from the Roman Catholic Church who had lived in the County Leitrim. His career was somewhat peculiar. After entering the Irish ministry he received an appointment in England, where he spent about ten years (1755-65). Evidently he had some faith in "apostolical succession," for he sought and received ordination from the Greek Bishop Erasmus; this led to his severance from the Methodist Connexion. He, however, retained John Wesley's friendship. In 1765, with Wesley's approval, he went to Newfoundland as a lay missionary, and settled at Harbour Grace. Two years later he returned to England, and through the good offices of Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon he was ordained by the Bishop of London, and returned to work in Newfoundland under the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. His knowledge of the Irish language proved of great value, for one-fourth of the population around Conception Bay where he lived were Roman Catholics from his own country. Though now a missionary of the Church of England, he was a Methodist at heart. In writing to Wesley, he says: "The name (Methodist) I love and hope I ever shall; the plan which you first taught me I have followed as to doctrine and discipline." He formed weekly classes and established a Methodist Society among the converts. He suffered persecution on account of his work among the fisher folk. In course of time his health began to give way; he could not stand the necessary journeys over rough seas, and in 1773 he returned to England. Dr. Findlay says of him: "Whatever may have been the faults of this impulsive and vehement Irish preacher, he was the first to plant the standard of the Gospel in the oldest British colony: his work lived and has borne imperishable fruit."

On Coughlan's retirement Ireland supplied his successors in the persons of JOHN STRETTON and ARTHUR THOMEY. They were laymen. John Wesley was often a welcome guest at the home of Stretton's father in Limerick. The son eventually in 1770 emigrated to Newfoundland in pursuit of business. Arthur Thomey, formerly of Dublin, afterwards resident in Harbour Grace, was one of Coughlan's converts. Both of these men worked nobly together in spreading the Gospel. Thomey died in 1784 and Stretton was left alone. At this time the Methodist cause was being strongly opposed both by the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches. Stretton wrote to Wesley pleading for a minister to take charge of the work. In response, JOHN McGEARY was appointed. An Irishman by birth, he had travelled in the United States under Asbury's direction. During a visit to England Wesley interviewed him and sent him to Newfoundland. Though an earnest and faithful minister, he was not suited to the work and left for England in 1792.

It was not till 1804 that his successor was appointed in the person of JOHN REMMINGTON, an "Irishman of lively temperament, winning personality and devoted piety." His career lasted only six years, but "he left in the hearts of all who knew him an imperishable memory." After further service in Ireland he died in 1839.

In 1808, WILLIAM ELLIS and SAMUEL McDOWELL joined Remmington. The latter after several years of arduous toil returned to a circuit at home, not being able to stand the severity of the climate. Ellis, however, won the honour of being the first Methodist preacher to finish his course in the colony. He was wonderfully used in a notable revival in 1810-11. "Though not possessing the striking gifts of his fellow-workers, he had serviceable and enduring qualities; he was uncommonly gentle and gracious, eloquent in speech, faithful and laborious, a model pastor and superintendent."

JOHN ALLISON, a thoughtful and religious man of Irish Presbyterian extraction, became convinced of the Arminian position by reading some of Fletcher's writings. He became one of the lay fathers of Nova Scotia Methodism. His family

prospered in the colony and the name is commemorated by Mount Allison College at Sackville—an institution of considerable importance.

In 1791, JOHN REGAN was one of six young men appointed to the colony, but within a few years he returned to the United States and died early. 1800 saw the arrival of JOHN LOWRY, who had spent one year of probation in Ireland. He soon lost his health and left for the United States. In 1808, JAMES KNOWLAN, "an Irishman of wit and intellectual force," whom we have already mentioned in our account of the West Indies, came to Nova Scotia on the ground of health. He was a man of outstanding ability and force of character. He had studied for the bar, but had entered the ministry and was appointed to the West Indies. Sensitive in spirit, the cruelties of slavery bore heavily upon his heart, and not robust in body he had to seek a more bracing climate. For twelve years he served the Church in Nova Scotia. An able preacher and keen controversialist, he made a deep impression. Later he was appointed Chairman of the Canada District. Though happy in his relations with his brethren and his people, his administration did not commend itself to the Committee in London, and so he withdrew from active service.

As our story has brought us temporarily to Canada, it may be well to remind ourselves that BARBARA HECK from Ireland was responsible for sowing the seeds of Methodism in Canada as well as in New York. She had removed in 1780 to Montreal and there began to bear her witness. Further west, MAJOR GEORGE MCNEAL, of Irish ancestry but American birth, added his testimony. His home near the Niagara Falls has been called the second birthplace of Canadian Methodism. Valiant in his witness and honoured in his life, he proved a zealous and successful Local Preacher. Many were won for Christ and the Methodist Church through his labours, and "for fifty years his house was the hospitable centre of Methodism in the Niagara Circuit."

Another Irish-American was JAMES MCCARTY—a remarkable man. Converted in the United States under Whitfield's preaching, though not a Methodist hitherto, he soon identified himself with the cause. A preacher of very great power and

attraction, he quickly gathered around him large crowds. As a non-conformist from the rebel States he suffered persecution at the hands of loyal Anglicans. He was imprisoned and then released. Later he disappeared, and it is not certain how he met his death. That he was murdered is almost a certainty. He has been called the proto-martyr of Canadian Methodism.

Briefly we have reviewed the work of our pathfinders in the Western World; it is a record of which we have no need to be ashamed. In founding the Church in the West Indies and on the North American Continent Irish Methodism played an honourable and devoted part.

EUROPE

In more than one place, soldiers have been the pioneers of Methodism. This was the case in Gibraltar. Some who had been in touch with Methodism in Ireland and had profited thereby formed themselves into a Society; in 1793 there were one hundred and twenty members. The numbers must have been larger when JAMES McMULLEN was appointed in 1804. He and his wife and little child arrived when an epidemic of fever was raging. Within a short time both he and his wife were dead. The child lived to become the mother of the Rev. Dr. Rigg, one of the outstanding men of British Methodism in the last century.

INDIA AND CEYLON

Knowing that the seed sown in the Western Continent was germinating, Dr. Coke turned his attention towards the East. He set sail for Ceylon in 1813, taking with him a number of men, amongst whom was JAMES LYNCH, a converted Roman Catholic from the North of Ireland who had become a minister in our Church. Dr. Coke died on the voyage and was buried at sea. The band was left leaderless, but some of them had the qualities of leadership. James Lynch certainly had. He with the others landed in Bombay on the 21st of May, 1814. He was instructed later on by the Committee in London to act as Superintendent of the Ceylon Mission, and consequently settled in Jaffna. By 1817 he had moved to Madras, whilst

continuing to administer the Northern District of Ceylon. It is said of him that in some respects he was the most remarkable missionary who sailed with Dr. Coke. The fact that he was chosen by his brethren to preside over their councils and to be their representative in dealing with the Home Committee shows that he had their confidence. Dr. Findlay says of him: "His portrait reveals a personality in which both strength and tenderness are combined; there is a winsomeness in his face which accounts for the affection of his brethren and an expression of inward peace and joy which could come only from a good conscience and faith unfeigned."

On his way to Madras he preached at Negapatam. Thus it became the place where the first message was delivered in India by a Methodist missionary. The story of Lynch's manifold work in India cannot be told here; it is related by the Rev. C. H. Monahan, the present Chairman of the Madras District, in a booklet written for the Centenary Celebrations held in that District in 1917. The writer of this chapter was present at the celebrations. He has often preached in the church built by Lynch in Georgetown (formerly Blacktown), and has frequently looked upon his portrait in the vestry. Indirectly Lynch exercised an even wider influence in India. Dr. William Butler, the founder of the Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America in India, was an Irishman. When on a visit to the Irish Conference, he said: "James Lynch laid his hands on my youthful head and from him I received the missionary spirit." To-day the mission he founded is one of the strongest in India, and has reaped abundant harvests among the outcastes, and through one of its well-known missionaries, Dr. Stanley Jones, author of *The Christ of the Indian Road*, has influenced many of the educated men and women of the land.

GEORGE ERSKINE, who went to Ceylon at the same time as Lynch, proved a quiet but effective worker. If little has been said about him, we must not forget that some of the best workers in the Foreign Field are seldom heard of. They sow and others reap.

JOHN MCKENNY, mentioned elsewhere in the chapter, also gave part of his service to the island.

Irish Methodism may fairly claim WILLIAM ARTHUR as one of her choicest gifts to India. At the Conference of 1837 the President, Dr. Bunting, said concerning him: "I wish you would give us that young man for India." He was given. His service was, however, of brief duration as his eyesight began to give trouble, and the doctors were insistent that he should return home. Reluctantly he did so in 1841. He afterwards rendered notable service to the Missionary Society as one of its Secretaries from 1851 to 1868. He had already published in 1847 a "Mission to the Mysore." Later he wrote "The Tongue of Fire," a book on the Holy Spirit, at one time widely read. He died full of years and honour.

CHINA

Whilst there is no record of any Irish minister in the early days in China, we do know that, as in Gibraltar and elsewhere, Irish soldiers had something to do with the introduction of Methodism. When the 59th Regiment went to Hong Kong in 1849, it had in its ranks a member of society from Longford—Colour-Serjeant Ross. He gathered round him those who sought the deeper things in life. He then wrote to the Mission House in London pleading that a missionary should be sent, at the same time enclosing £10 as a subscription from himself and his fellow-soldiers. GEORGE PIERCY responded to the call at his own expense, but before he arrived an epidemic of fever had carried off Colour-Serjeant Ross. Thus began our great work in China.

WEST AFRICA

Dr. Coke was also responsible for beginning the work here. At the request of the African Society he sent out a party of mechanics and Methodist Local Preachers to be employed as teachers to the Foulah tribes. The experiment was not a success and the doctor was bitterly disappointed, "bleeding at every pore," as he himself said. Once again he turned to Ireland, and found ARCHIBALD MURDOCK and

WILLIAM PATTEN. Though appointed by Conference, they were for some reason never sent, the former going to the West Indies, the latter remaining at home. It was not until 1850 that the Mission in West Africa got its first Irishman, in the person of JAMES EDNEY, whom we have already seen at work in the West Indies. He was appointed the General Superintendent of Sierra Leone and remained until 1855, when he returned to his former sphere of labour.

SOUTH AFRICA AND AUSTRALIA

Amongst those who accompanied Dr. Coke on the voyage to the East was JOHN MCKENNY, the only one of the seven designated for South Africa. He arrived and began work there, but the sphere was not congenial. After a few months he returned to Ceylon, where he worked for a number of years. He was then appointed to Australia to be in charge of Sydney and the New South Wales District. He was "an able, and sensible and thoroughly conscientious man, courteous, dignified and business-like in his official work, considerate for his colleagues, and kindly and faithful towards his people"; he died in the colony in 1847, two years after laying down the office which he had ably filled for ten years.

A man of outstanding gifts was T. T. N. HULL. After travelling for about eleven years in Ireland he offered for foreign work. He was stationed (so it is stated in the History of the Missionary Society) successively in the West Indies, Gibraltar, Malta, though there is no record of his work in these places. It is when he comes to Australia that we find high praise given to him. He is spoken of as a "minister of rare worth and experience, who came to be regarded by many as the ablest minister with which the Australian Church had been favoured." Those who knew him speak of "his logical acumen, refined taste, exalted eloquence, and impressive appeals. . . . He walked with God and drew men thither too." He afterwards returned to Ireland and lived until 1903 in Dalkey, where a tablet is placed to his memory in the Methodist Church.

The work of NATHANIEL PIDGEON, City Missionary in Sydney, and that of GEORGE STANNARD in New Zealand were fruits of their earlier life in Ireland, but perhaps the most remarkable instance of Ireland's contribution to the Methodism of Australia lies in the story of an unnamed Irishman who had been educated for the Bar. Under pressure of strong temptation he had committed forgery and was sentenced to death. In his prison cell he was visited by some friendly Methodists, and under their guidance found Christ as his Saviour. Further consideration of his case led to the commutation of his death sentence to that of transportation. He was banished to New South Wales. As a devoted Christian worker he had much success in Sydney. Methodist Societies were formed; in course of time an urgent appeal was sent home, and in response to it the Missionary Society sent out the Rev. Samuel Leigh—the first Wesleyan missionary who laboured in Australia. God often chooses the second best in men's lives; nay, more, He takes shattered lives and rebuilds them into new beauty and strength and uses them for His purposes.

THE MODERN PERIOD

We have already mentioned that there was a time in the history of our Church in Ireland when the momentum of her early missionary enthusiasm seems to have slackened, at least as far as volunteers for the work abroad were concerned. It was, however, only an interval, for within the last forty years the Church has experienced a wave of missionary devotion as great as, if not greater than, that which characterised her earlier life. We have to-day more missionaries on the Field than at any previous time.

At the beginning of this later period it was necessary for those ministers who wished to enter the service of the Missionary Society to join the English Conference. This will explain why the following Irish workers are members of that Conference. Ebenezer Webster went to South India in 1887; his wisdom and ability brought him eventually to the Chair of the Negapatam District. A few years later he was

followed by Charles H. Monahan, who was appointed to the Madras District, where he is now Chairman. Few men in any field have rendered service of such quality and devotion as he has done. His influence in South India extends far beyond the bounds of our own Church. In more recent years four sons of Irish Methodist homes entered the ministry in England and went to the Foreign Field: William Vickery to Burma, C. Deane Little to China, G. A. Elliott to the West Indies, and G. Herbert McCormick to the Mysore and North India.

To the ministry of the South African Conference, we have contributed W. M. Douglas, W. J. Russell, David Moore, J. Wesley McGahie, and Walter Ludlow.

In 1890 a new arrangement was made between the Irish Conference and the Missionary Society whereby ministers going out from Ireland should retain their connection with the Irish Conference and should be free to return to the work in Ireland from the Foreign Field. Some years later new financial arrangements were agreed upon which meant that in the course of a few years Ireland ceased to receive the large grant from the Missionary Society which had been allocated to it for many years. As this has been dealt with in another chapter, there is no need to repeat it here. It should, however, be pointed out that these arrangements opened up a new day for Ireland's connection with the Foreign Field. Some timid souls felt that if the grant were withdrawn by the Missionary Society, our Church would need every penny she could raise for her own work and that nothing would be left to send for the work abroad. Their fears proved groundless; not only has Irish Methodism ceased to receive the grant, but to-day she contributes over £14,000 a year to the work of the Society. Furthermore, the fact that our missionaries still remain members of our Conference and Church leads our people to a personal interest which could not possibly be theirs if in giving our young people to the work it was necessary to transfer them to the English Conference.

In following our missionaries in recent years we may adopt the same method as in the case of the pioneers, by

looking at the various countries separately, though we shall not take them in the same order.

INDIA

The first missionaries of the modern period were designated to India. H. Guard Price went to South India in 1894, and T. J. McClelland to North India in 1896; the former worked both in the Negapatam and Hyderabad Districts and was held in high esteem; the latter became Chairman of the Calcutta District. His eager spirit was too strong for a frail body and a few years ago he died at home. In 1904 John Redmond went as Planters' Padre to the Mysore District. He spent his years in a task that required both tact and courage and in it met with considerable success. In the following year the writer of this chapter was appointed to the Madras District, where he had the privilege of working for twenty years, the greater part of the time being spent in connection with Wesley College, Madras. In 1920 R. H. Foster joined the staff of the same District and gave promise of a most successful career. After six years' service he had to return home owing to ill health. We are at present represented there by C. W. Ranson, who is in charge of important work in the city of Madras.

Our women workers have equal claim to mention, for without their work among women, men's work among men could only be half done. Dr. Fanny Wood (Mrs. Gibbens) was the first Irish doctor in this field. She laid the foundations of a most successful work in Ikkadu and at Nagari. Dr. Margaret Wolfe (Mrs. Foster) continued the work of Mrs. Gibbens in the latter station. Miss Ismena Warren is helping in our industrial work in Madras.

Before the call of the Great War claimed him, Ernest B. Martin was assisting as a lay missionary in the High School at Mysore. He afterwards entered the Indian Educational Service. When on furlough he was killed in London in a motor accident. Frederick E. Hill and George Kell are both in the Mysore District, the one already a promising vernacular preacher and efficient missionary, the other learning his job.

This District has been privileged in having a succession of devoted women doctors. Dr. Caroline V. Lowe began the work in the Redfern Memorial Hospital, Hassan, and was followed by Dr. Lilla Robb and Dr. Helen McCrea. Dr. Charlotte Carlisle, lent by the Presbyterian Church, is at present in another hospital in this area. Miss Henrietta Moore is still remembered in Hassan for her work amongst the girls.

In Hyderabad, Wilfred Stafford, though still in his first term of service, has already won his spurs. For a number of years Miss J. Cullen has proved the efficient head of the Girls' School in Medak. Dr. Elsie Campbell, when setting out upon a promising medical career, had to return home owing to ill health.

In North-West India most of our work is amongst soldiers. It is a sphere of service of the utmost importance and ought to be regarded as an integral part of our missionary contribution to that land. R. T. Kerr, R. H. Spence, J. D. Kelly, J. H. Munro and J. E. Glanville are no mean contributors from Ireland to the British Army in India.

Dr. Harold Maguire has now charge of the Mission Hospital in Sarenga, Bengal.

CEYLON

In Ceylon, R. W. McVeigh and R. A. Nelson are but recent arrivals, the first Irish Methodist ministers of the modern period to take up work in that island. On the women's side, however, we have a longer history. Miss Teasey led the way. Sister Easter Hayden followed in 1910, Miss Bamford in 1914, and Miss Northridge in 1916. There are many to-day who have reason to thank God for the work of such women. The Methodist College, Colombo, is one of the finest Girls' Schools in the island. Miss Elsie Shire, Miss Helen Park, Miss Mary McDonald and Miss Maud H. Johnson are all on its staff—keen and capable teachers. It is fairly obvious that in this school at least the English language will be spoken with an Irish accent. In later years

Miss Jean Sharpe, Miss Dorothy Beckett, and Miss Ella Twinem have been added to our staff on the island.

BURMA

The number of our missionaries in the Burmese field is small, and so far but few from Ireland have been called. J. A. L. Irvine was there for a short time. Miss Annie Merrick has already given over sixteen years of able service to the women and girls of Burma. Miss Maeve Smith has just gone out to bear her company.

CHINA

Up to the present China has not claimed many Irish missionaries. In 1898, Robert T. Booth, minister and doctor, went to China. A man of brilliant gifts and forceful character, he made a deep impression during the few years he was permitted to work in Hankow. He died unexpectedly at his home in Cork when on furlough. Following in the footsteps of Dr. Booth came two brothers, Dr. Richard and Dr. George Hadden. The former gave himself lavishly to China, and at last gave his life; the latter remains to carry on the work. A. W. Hill and W. T. Lindsay have also represented us there, the latter in educational work; he has also given some years to the High School in Bangalore, India.

In China, as in Ceylon, our women workers have predominated. Miss Anna Wood, missionary and novelist; Miss D. Oliver, Miss Sadie Laird, Miss Muriel Campbell, Miss Elizabeth Warner, Miss Kathleen Addy, and Miss Eileen Wilson have in different spheres, and often under trying circumstances, helped to mould the minds and hearts of China's womanhood.

WEST AFRICA

Whatever may be said about the climate of West Africa, and much has been said against it, the work there has not failed to attract our volunteers. H. G. Martin was our first missionary to be sent to this field. He was followed two

years later by W. G. Waterworth, who has given twenty years of unstinted service to the Gold Coast. H. N. Medd spent some years of fruitful toil in Mendiland. The promising career of W. H. Green was cut short by illness. He died soon after his return to the Home Work. The Mfantsipim High School at Cape Coast has for some years been an Irish preserve, with the indefatigable R. A. Lockhart at its head, and W. A. Warren and W. E. Cullen as his assistants. Paul Kingston is busy laying the foundations of widespread work at Opobo in Nigeria, and is giving himself to the work of translating the New Testament for the benefit of his people. R. N. Ludlow and Miss E. M. Ludlow have gone to a neighbouring sphere. Dr. E. U. MacWilliam did a great deal to develop our hospital at Ilesha, and Dr. Kearney is opening up similar work in Mendiland. Vivian Simpson, with business gifts of a high order, has found a layman's place in Lagos, Nigeria.

In Cape Coast, Miss Suzanne Fannin amongst the girls; in Bathurst, Miss Myra Storey as a nurse amongst women and children, and Miss Doris Grubb in the School at Kumasi, have all brought help and healing to Africa's daughters.

William Meara went to South Africa in 1898. He has had a long and honoured career in that country. At present he is in charge of the Central Mission in Johannesburg, where he preaches to large congregations. James Stewart has found his sphere in Rhodesia.

WEST INDIES

We have come full circle to those islands where we began our story, the West Indies. They have not attracted as many Irish workers as in the days of our pathfinders, but those who have gone have not failed to maintain the traditions set by the earlier workers. Frederick J. Ball went to the Bahamas in 1909, to be followed by F. J. Parker to Jamaica in 1911; part of his time was given to our work in Panama. J. T. Burchill and Frank Bateman have also served. At present we are worthily represented by A. E. Nelson and Walter Crowe.

BRITISH GUIANA

On the coast of South America in British Guiana, Harold M. Yates and W. E. Morley Thompson have had their share in developing the important work among the Indian immigrants.

The limits of space have made this chapter little more than the recital of the names of our missionaries. If it were possible to set them in the background of their work and of the peoples amongst whom they have laboured, the story would be of deeper interest. Sufficient, however, has been said to show that our Church in Ireland has sought to give expression to her inner life by responding to the call of other lands. The missionary spirit still burns brightly. Amongst our young people the flame is rekindled from year to year at the Summer School in Tullamaine, and in the work of the Girls' League and that of the Young Laymen's League, and in our Christian Endeavour Societies which contribute to the support of their own missionary. As long as our Church at home lives upon the experience which gave her birth she will wish to share it, and so long will her sons and daughters hear and respond to the call of those who dwell in lands afar.

NOTE.—Miss Kathleen Hanna (now Mrs. Winston) was the first of our women workers to go to the Burma area.

VII

IRISH METHODISM AND YOUTH

REV. WILLIAM CORRIGAN

YOUTH AND ITS PROBLEMS

THE youth of Irish Methodism cannot be understood and interpreted apart from conditions and influences no longer obvious to the superficial observer. The stream of the new generation carries tints and flavours from catchment areas far removed from the present day and the present modes of life. In their efforts to adjust themselves to the new age in the Home, the Church and the State, young Methodists find themselves the subjects of conflicting influences, the more difficult to understand because they refuse to be classified as simply good or bad.

This problem of theirs, growing daily in perplexity, may be found difficult of solution unless their mental and spiritual guides, and notably their parents, are endowed with the moral proportion, the mental and spiritual perspective, and the imaginative insight which are among the last and rarest accomplishments of well-furnished religious guides.

There are aspects of spiritual life, authenticated both by Scripture and conscience, in which the leaders of youth may become provocative rather than attractive, and when failure attends their efforts to win others to their own views and experience, they may fall victims to despairing self-reproach or censorious self-justification. In either case the standpoint of youth is misunderstood for want of an "experiencing mind," and there has frequently followed the double failure, to diagnose the mentality of the young people, and then to interpret them to themselves.

In relation to youth it is essential to exemplify religion in such harmony of the human faculties as would be visible

to the onlooker at every angle of life, and in sympathetic consciousness of youth's ideas and ideals respecting what is true, honest, lovely and of good report.

Such a beautiful balance was seen in Palestine nearly two thousand years ago, in One who drew to Himself the most contrary tastes and needs; One who so satisfied the exacting test of the instinct of youth that He need scarce have used words in inviting the little child to Him and setting him in the midst.

When in ungarded phrase we speak of "approaching" the youth of our Church, we seem to suggest an idea of distance or separateness unwarranted by the facts. Such a view of the situation would have less justification in Ireland than probably in any other branch of Methodism; when they are not beside us in forced uniformity, they are not therefore beside themselves; their independence and assertiveness, instead of being looked upon as marks of moral turpitude, must in most cases be viewed as their reactions to the world they live in, as distinct from ours as that of the young ducklings from their foster parent's, when they take to the water leaving their guardian hen in horror on the shore, a picture of solicitude and despair.

The problem of the young people in relation to the Church is then mainly accounted for by each side misunderstanding and being misunderstood by the other, and the onus of finding the solution rests on the Church. It will never be found along the line of judging, and perhaps condemning, youth in theological courts made by men for men. Youth's refusal to recognize the court may often consist with a reasonable and reverent attitude of mind, and coming without observation or announcement the alienation of youth may begin.

To avert this danger for the Church and the child, and to save each for the other to-day, is the greatest task that ever fell to the friend of both. In this endeavour we have achieved something in Ireland which has impressed visitors from every other branch of universal Methodism, and the principal human factor in our success, not of our creation,

lies so far out of the present and out of sight that our minds must now journey backward for half a century.

YOUTH AND ITS HERITAGE

The growth of moral instincts and allegiance through the generations is such a slow process that we must look into a half-forgotten past to account for the youth of our Church to-day, but we will be rewarded by discovering something which is perhaps the most influential of the inherited elements which give the child a "running start" in the religious life. A true pen picture of that formative period may seem foreign and unreal to those whose lives are bounded by the city, and whose parents were not country-born, but even these in the proportion of perhaps ten to one derive from a stock which lived on the land and touched nature and human nature at their fountain head.

In those settings and circumstances the typical Methodist child awoke to its first consciousness, and to ideas which produced impressions that became part of its very being. Filtering down through the memories of the generations, those scenes are slowly fading out to the certain impoverishment of the Methodism of the future, but their constructive influence will long remain an asset of Irish Methodism, the fruit of far-off years ripened in shelter and mental leisure unknown in the world of to-day.

Seen through the child's eye and mind, and magnified by its vivid imagination, the little universe bounded by the father's farm may here reconstruct itself on one of the notable days of the family calendar. The daily round is being fulfilled by the workers in and out of doors, with a difference: there are certain extras which seem unaccountable, the morrow not being Sunday; there is subdued excitement and animation which cannot be explained by the approach of any family festival; the house internally is being hustled into a decorum that it could not long sustain in the ordinary course of its work; outside equipments are being diverted from the convenience of usage to an orderliness that is most unbusinesslike; there is a stall in the stable which seems prepared for a new occupant; there is neatness and cleanliness around

which in later days might gladden the eye of the public health department, and the general air of the place seems vibrant with a sense of expectancy. We ask for the secret of it all, and we are told—"THE PREACHER IS COMING."

The impact of such a day on the child's sensibility was incalculable. The growing pains of the mind, perhaps also of the spirit, began. A new and wider world broke into the narrow bounds of the old. Beyond the forbidden bend of the road, beyond the farthest hills, were people and doings unheard of till now by the untravelled child.

The preacher was at once the news of the world and the wireless of the day, and filled the part of entertainer, delineator, and commentator respecting men and movements of wider areas than the bounds of the circuit plan. For the first time were heard the titles of books like "The Pilgrim's Progress," "The Holy War," "Young's Night Thoughts," "Paradise Lost," and "The Wesley Family." Magic names were mentioned with reverence—George Whitefield, Mrs. Wesley and her illustrious sons, John Fletcher, Adam Clarke, possibly Watson and Bunting, certainly Walsh and Ouseley. Then was first seen "The Irish Evangelist" with its flaming star on the front page, advertising an insurance society whose light would go anywhere but under a bushel; and that hallmark of the Methodist home of the day, "The Christian Miscellany," with the accent straying to the second syllable, and its cover adorned by grotesque symbolisms which evoked youthful wonder almost akin to worship without reproof from the Second Commandment, for they were not the likeness of anything in heaven above or the earth beneath.

But none of these things constituted the chief distinctiveness of days and places which were no unfit companions of Apostolic times. There was still another world from which light was to break on the horizon of the child's mind. Many of the preacher's words may have carried no translatable meaning to the brain, but in their very mystery was enshrined some certainty about God and His love, and a life in a world to come which haunted the conscience and the heart from incredibly early years; and the light of common day would never fade that picture of the assembled neigh-

bours, and the preacher behind the chair announcing the opening hymn:—

“Come, sinners, to the Gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesu’s guest.”

On a coming day the youth, kindling to the call of the wider life, would leave the shelter of home for a world of untried being, where men of might contend for mastery and the weaker ones are trodden down in the thoroughfares. Whether his fate be victory or defeat may well depend on the persistence of the moral strength and guiding vision which began to gird him, though he knew it not, on the day the preacher came.

Some may find it hard to be saved, but there are many who find it hard to get lost.

YOUTH AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The counsels of Irish Methodism at the beginning of this century were marked by serious concern for its young people in relation to Christ and the Church. The problem was not new, but in some of its aspects it had newly emerged from comparative neglect in the shadow of more pressing projects which had absorbed the attention of the Church. Its difficulty was accentuated by the fact that very little light was obtainable from formal guidance in Scripture or precedent. Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New were children considered as a separate entity, but were in their religious privileges vitally and inseparably related to the parents and the household. More than a hint of their emancipation from this spiritual subservience may be found in their separate recognition by our Lord Jesus Christ, yet God’s covenant with the children is bound in and through that with the parents. Even in the Evangelical revival of which Methodism is the lineal descendant the children as such had little place or advantage except through the regenerated lives of their parents, and the redeeming influences of the more spiritual atmosphere of domestic and social life. They were protected and safeguarded more effectually perhaps than in later days, and were the objects of affectionate solicitude on the part

of the preachers in the years of the closer intimacies arising from monthly visits to the homes of the people, but for better or worse they had not yet come into their own.

Following upon this problem came another, still more urgent in its demand for immediate practical attention. It was presented by the new mentality of youth, and the difficulty of meeting and satisfying it with such a presentation of religious life as it could accept and experience. This two-fold problem has influenced Irish Methodist preaching, and still more Irish Methodist policy during the past quarter of a century in a greater degree than in any previous period of its history.

The Church in its work amongst the young became conscious not only of want of method but of wrong methods. No other department of the work could suffer so much through obstinate devotion to the obsolete. What traditional teachers pleaded for as old paths appeared to younger minds as old ruts. Defenceless children were in danger of being approached through a theology which never was made for them, and in a manner unsuited to their comprehension. Annual reports of the work savoured too much of the schedule and statistics, and too little of soul and sympathy. Even the best methods of approach to the young mind and heart were seen to be of less importance than a right perception of the world they live in, and its difference from our own. This reflection was destined to remove wrong suppositions from the minds of preacher and teacher.

The stages of development in attempting to solve the problem of the attitude of youth to religion might be roughly indicated by three assumptions.

The first assumption was that the young people might normally be expected to wander into the far country like other sinners, and return through the door of conversion with experiences similar to theirs. This view prevailed long after it might have been seen to have no sanction in anything said by Christ either about the child or conversion, and was based on a perverted doctrine of original sin.

The second assumption, still with us, is that we should confine our appeal to the moral sense of the child, waiting

watchfully for its development. But in this period of waiting other senses in full working order have been found responding to appeals from the wrong direction, and whatever makes the first claim on the child's imagination and idealism would take possession from which it will be difficult to displace it. Many students of child nature maintain that the foundations of character are laid before the sixth year is reached, and it is certain that the earliest instincts and impressions survive longest.

The third assumption is not intended to supersede, but to supplement, the second one. It should precede it in the order of thought and hold the governing place in the mind. It is based on the belief that the children begin life in the Father's house and could be kept there by such featuring of the religious life as would make it the most alluring and compelling thing in the world. The child's sensibility responds to suggestions, feelings and visions which have their home in the spiritual and eternal, and at an unsuspectedly early age the mystery of the unseen, and the certainty of Jesus and His love can mark the young heart for their own. When Christ found it needful to approach men through the glamour of picture and story in which they would find the moral appeal for themselves more effectively than if it came in direct frontal attack, how much more needful that we should adapt our methods to the taste and capacity of the little ones who live in a world which has its own avenue of approach.

Here we encounter the fact that Christ's appeals to men made little formal mention of conversion, though they involved it. He saved them from their sins by attracting them to Himself and constraining them to follow Him. In thus following and making more intimate discoveries of His altogether loveliness men would also make contrasted discoveries of the hideousness of sin, and the joy of having forsaken it for Him.

The beginning of the Christian life in the child of the Christian home must differ widely from its beginning in the mature man who consciously forsakes sin in finding Christ, and yet there must be some similarity because in both it is the same spiritual life. The conversion of the man marks

a crisis in which he is vividly conscious of a turning point. The beginning of the Christian life in the child may also be a crisis, marked by a supreme discovery of Christ's beauty and goodness, with an authority that commands devotion and obedience to the children's Lord and Friend. This crisis may be accompanied by the sense of reproof for feelings and thoughts unlike Him, which even in one so young we may call the sense of sin. But many young people have never been able to identify such an experience, and declare they cannot remember a time when they did not desire to love and please their Lord, and they prove the genuineness of their religion in His approved way, by its fruits.

In Irish Methodism these differing types are found in mutual recognition and cordial unity in the fellowship and work of the Church, and if we must draw any distinction between them it will not be respecting their quality and genuineness, but their experience and temperament. The Christians of early culture are often found to be steadier, though less vocal, while those converted in a memorable crisis are generally more actively evangelistic, though often less patient with other types than their own.

The new century has outgrown some interpretations of Scripture, much theological definition and many methods that met the needs of former days, but Irish Methodism presses on through them all with that secret of eternal youthfulness, the rapture of the heart that knows the love of Christ and tells others what it has found. By this sign, too, we will know genuine Methodism, its genius for adapting itself, not to the conditions of bygone days, but to the new needs of the new time, that like its founder it may ever be ready "to serve the *present* age."

YOUTH AND THE CHURCH

THE FAMILY PEW

Among the changes which have marked the past half-century in Irish Methodism one of the most conspicuous has been the disappearance of the family pew. The children were shepherded to church, marched up the aisle and into the

accustomed enclosure; the door was then bolted by the masterful parent, who sat beside it as a kind of collateral security, and escape, if desired, was impossible till the coveted benediction was pronounced. This benevolent compulsion symbolised some other things in the church-going lives of the youth of former days. With all their outward appearance of unquestioned authority and abounding prosperity those comfortable-looking conditions gave little reason for enquiring if everything was well with the child, and even youths with some obstinate questionings on their own account had not yet developed the courage to challenge the assumption of their superiors that the word "rights" had no place in the dictionary of the young.

Almost imperceptibly arose the disturbing suspicion of want of perfect adjustment between the Church and the young. To the latter the Church seemed made for the older people, whose taste or endurance regulated the character and length of the services, and the proportions of the body of divinity in the sermons. The mind of certain types of youth found other ameliorations with fertile resourcefulness, among the least reprehensible being the counting of the window-panes, the exact number of which, however, they were long familiar with.

It may seem strange to the youth of to-day that conditions such as these did not finally prejudice the claims of Christ and His Church on the devotion and allegiance of the youth of half a century ago. Such apparent repression might be expected to follow the course of all repressions, in a sharp, defiant recoil in the years of liberty and maturity from the severe control under which they must often have chafed. But the strange fact remains that some of the best life and work in our Church to-day must be credited to those who not only submitted to that rigid oversight, but actually speak of it with gratitude.

Such an exception to the general working of human nature can only be accounted for by two factors which worked together then with great effect, but have now lost much of their power. The first was a moderated Puritanism still strong enough to fight a rearguard action against the

advancing spirit of the age; the second was a strict, but loving, parental authority which made the puritanical atmosphere potent and pervasive in home and Church relationships. These reinforced the ministry of those days in a manner now almost unknown, and that ministry specialised in directly personal and spiritual work to a degree impossible in these days of manifold and distracting Church organisations and activities. If "Methodist Minister" has become the significant and appropriate designation now, "Methodist preacher" was the honoured designation then. They lived under the double motto which might well be coveted by their present-day successors—"We preach," and "This one thing I do."

YOUTH'S MENTAL PATHFINDING

But in the midst of all those advantages and the resultant success which can still be traced, there were inarticulate rumblings in the minds of the new generation which were destined to shake on a future day some dry bones in the body ecclesiastic.

In the first place the growing self-consciousness of youth began to discern the disparity between its own world of thought and feeling and that which the Church seemed to represent. The young people felt that their instincts and aspirations could not be dovetailed into those even of the best men and women in the Church, and they felt they could not honestly and naturally express themselves in the standardized and approved forms applicable to those of riper years.

Then the religious experience of youth, though unexpressed, could not and should not be in conformity with that of their seniors who bore the brunt of the battle of life and could speak of spiritual depressions and deliverances that the young people never know. They lived in totally different realms of the same spiritual world.

Further, the advances of education, especially in the higher grades, had given the rising youth of the Church such a new mentality through their further knowledge that a new method of approach had become necessary if the grounds of our appeal were to be disentangled from outworn phraseology,

and related to those things which cannot be shaken, and to the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.

From a different direction another disturbing element arrived. The scientific interpretation of the world and life, once confined to occasional inaccessible lectures, now flooded the popular press and demanded a readjustment of accustomed views on matters closely related to the Christian faith. The combined effect of these new factors was such as to make a new demand on pulpit, classroom and statesmanship, if the need was to be adequately met and our young people retained for the Church, and one of the best results of this demand was the enforced recognition of the fact that Christ is Lord of all life.

It was reported at the last Ecumenical Conference that in many sections of Methodism eight out of ten of the Sunday School children were lost to the Church in later years. Such a falling off in Irish Methodism with its rigidly limited catchment area, would in a few years bring the Church to the verge of extinction over the greater part of the country. Instead of thus losing eight out of ten of our young people, it is fairly safe to affirm that we have not lost two out of ten. How the eight-tenths have been retained by the policy and methods devised for confronting the new conditions will now engage our attention, eliminating the interesting points of controversy in committee and Conference which heralded the new departure.

THE NEW DEPARTURE

It is difficult to appraise too highly the prophetic concern of our fathers for the welfare of the young in view of the new age, or the degree of sympathy which later revealed itself in co-operation in kinds of work which must often have seemed at variance with their own traditions. The stages which marked their growing appreciation of this problem, and the beginnings of policy and method which have given a new complexion to the work, can be traced in Conference statements and resolutions round about the beginning of the century. Reading between the lines, and still more behind

them, we can discover their estimate of the importance of the task to be encountered. Dissatisfaction with existing conditions may be inferred from the significant fact that for periods of successive years no mention was made of work amongst the young in the places where it would naturally be found, the annual pastoral addresses and the addresses to the British Conference.

The Conference of 1894 appointed a committee "to consider what steps should be taken for the spiritual advancement of young persons, and how best to retain our young people in Methodism; and also to consider the advisability of making provision for the consolidation of work amongst the young." It also referred to "the importance of laying hold of the elder scholars in our schools and training them early for Christian work"; and in 1895 it directed that "increased attention be given to the young people in connection with the public services on Sunday." It is easy to see the need which these words indicated and the direction in which they pointed.

In 1896 Conference united under one representative committee the oversight and direction of the hitherto separate organizations and activities connected with Sunday Schools, Bands of Hope and Christian Endeavour, and the developments of later years invested this Committee with an importance which has commanded the increasing attention of the Conference and the churches.

The Conference of 1899 recognised the unsatisfactory method of admissions to the membership of the Church, and the need for improvement in Sunday School teaching and methods, but it was not until 1902 that the comprehensive question of membership with all it involved for the young people was lifted into a prominence from which it could never again recede.

THE COMING OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR

Meanwhile a notable step had been taken, and with strange suddenness. For the first time in our history Irish Methodism had engrafted in its normal operations a great religious idea which had originated outside its own frontiers.

The Christian Endeavour movement had been founded in 1880 in the United States of America by Dr. Clark, and welcomed by the Churches for the promise it gave of filling a large place in the life and work of the young. The movement was adopted by our Conference in 1895 under the title by which it has ever since been known, "The Methodist Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour."

Two names must ever be associated with its inception: that of Mr. J. Newman Hall, B.A., who on visits to the States was impressed by its value to the Churches of America, and that of Rev. James D. Lamont, our first C.E. Secretary. The one had the honour of proposing its adoption; the other that of popularising it throughout Irish Methodism under its inspiring motto: "For Christ and His Church."

By this adventure Irish Methodism not only came eventually into conscious fellowship with world-wide Christendom, but provided for its young people a spiritual and social bond of a mutually helpful, cultural, and protective character, a suitable sphere for the development and exercise of their gifts, and an opportunity for service in which they did not feel dwarfed or discouraged by any painful consciousness of inferiority to those of riper years such as they might have experienced in other departments of Christian work.

They could now say, "It is a rich thing, and our own," and wherever they got the opportunity they rose to the greatness of the occasion.

JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

In the year 1895 a Committee was appointed to consider the conditions of Church membership and many related questions, including the relation of our baptised children to the Church, and the ages at which in the confused and varying practices of those days they were recognised as full members. This Committee continued its work during the following seven years, and its report and recommendations, having been referred to the Quarterly Meetings and Synods for their suggestions, were finally adopted by the Conference of 1909. This was the beginning of a fresh and momentous departure in the spirit and method of work amongst the young, their

relation to the Church and its work, and especially the manner in which the spiritual life of the young people and the Church acted and reacted on each other. The protective and restrictive methods of former years began to give place to the more effective policy of finding for our young people not only their spiritual home in the Church of their fathers, but also a sphere of spiritual and social activity in which they would find atmosphere and room for the fullest expansion and expression of their Christian life and service.

Of all the legislative decisions of the Conference of 1909, the following have made the most definite mark upon the later history of the Church:—

“(a) A Junior Membership shall be constituted, for which the baptised children of our Members and adherents shall be eligible, and in which, with the consent of their parents or guardians, they shall be enrolled. They may be retained as Junior Members up to the age of 16, provided that before that age, in the judgment of the Leaders’ Meeting, they do not prove themselves unworthy.

“(b) Such Junior Members may be received into Church Membership at any time before the age of 16, provided they comply with the conditions of Membership.

“(c) If, at the age of 16, a Junior Member declines to be received into Church Membership, the name shall be dropped from the Roll of Junior Members. At the special request of the Junior Member the time limit may be extended, but not beyond the time when such Junior Member shall have attained the age of 21.”

THE PREPARATION CLASSES

A closing paragraph was destined to create a revolution in our mode of work the magnitude of which was not fully apprehended at the time. It decided that “wherever practicable the minister shall conduct, or arrange for classes, wherein Junior Members and other religiously-disposed young persons of our Church may be trained, with the object of their being received into Church Membership.”

No new departure in the work of our Church met with more vigorous and searching criticism than this provision

for classes in which young people of a critical age might be met by their minister for the discussion of questions connected with their own spiritual life, their future, their coming relation to the Church of Christ, and particularly the Methodist section of it; and no new departure ever justified more completely the hopes and aims of its advocates. So confident were they of the urgency of the need of its adoption and the assurance of eventual success that some of the ministers had been experimenting with the idea for some years before its sanction by the Conference, and the attendant results had overcome many of the objections to the scheme.

Apart from the proved positive results, the negative advantages which this legislation secured for the Church were striking and immediate in the realm of membership. Previously, chaos reigned in many circuits, and was itinerating to others with the movements of ministers who, without breaking any existing ecclesiastical law, had been adopting their own ideas in the making and dropping of members. Believing that the new-born child was as pure in character if not as sound in the faith as the most seasoned members on their class books, the infant's name was added to the roll of full members with all its imperfections on its head in respect to its limited capacity for the proper apprehension of the privileges and responsibilities of the exalted position; and there it remained, swelling statistics if making little increase in Church fellowship and activity. On its human side the comedy was enjoyed, on its serious side the tragedy was deplored; but the inflated schedules passed the Synod and Conference, for against such there was then no law.

The position had become impossible for a Church whose procedure must march with whatsoever things are true, honest, and of good report, and the new legislation put an end to inflated returns on the strength of which some flamboyant Conference speeches were made by resourceful Superintendents, whose sanguine views of the growth of the work of God on their circuits were never endorsed by their successors.

The positive effects were greater still, as it is more difficult to construct a sound building than to destroy a

condemned one. The underlying idea here was the new need for studying the mentality of the youth of the day by listening in, as it were, to the working of its mind. At this particular age youth has a new conception of itself; it grows tired of being merely instructed and has an ambition for giving instead of receiving views. Here in the Preparation Class is the great opportunity for the minister, who, instead of talking to, talks with the young people, helping them to interpret themselves, to estimate their own worth and responsibility, and to assist them with guidance in coming to the momentous decision whether they will accept Christ as their Lord and Master and signalise this by accepting the privileges and responsibilities of membership in the Church. Such a decision has now the moral value of being the voluntary act of the young person, instead of having such a position imposed as in some former cases without the subject's knowledge, consent or approval.

The Preparation Classes, like other sections of Church organisation, do not claim to be free from defects inherent in all human arrangements, but they can fairly claim a larger proportion of success in their operation than any alternative method which had been tried or suggested. Not all who pass through them may avail of all the opportunity they offer, or having availed, may continue in worthy Church membership, any more than large numbers of adults who pass through special missions; many even who were moved to decision, falling away from their former steadfastness. But an experience of twenty years has provided a sufficient test on which to base the conviction that these classes, properly conducted, are vital to the well-being of our Church and our young people. They might easily be conducted perfunctorily and formally by those whose sincerity, reality and thoroughness of purpose had not been fully awakened by the sense of the gravity of the occasion, and who might slur over the greatest opportunity given to a leader, to make an impact for eternity on the young lives he may never come so near again; but that would be an almost incredible dereliction of the highest duty.

The following words, representative of many other testimonies, may fitly close this section. They are reported in the latest issue of the *Irish Christian Advocate*, from a District that was among the last to adopt the Preparation Classes in any general way:—"Tribute was borne to the opportunity provided in the Preparation Classes for bringing young people to decision for Christ."

YOUTH IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

The public reception of new members as one result of the Preparation Classes has a spiritual significance for the congregation into which they are received as well as for themselves, and old and young are henceforth thrown into a new fellowship and a new relationship in the worship and work of the Church. If a certain quality in the home life of the child is essential to its fullest future well-being, a certain helpful spiritual quality in the atmosphere and attitude of the Church is equally essential to the growth in grace and usefulness of the new members from the day of their public dedication.

Even the spectacular effect of their public reception is calculated to impress the minister and people with the importance of recognising the young people in the ordering and conduct of public worship. Since Jesus at twelve years of age was on His Father's business in the temple, hearing and asking questions of the elders, His Church should realise itself under an abiding obligation to minister equally to the interest and edification of youth and age, feeding at His command the lambs as well as the sheep.

The children's hymn and the children's address have accordingly become an established part of the order of the service in most Churches, and mark a gratifying advance toward a still unreached ideal, the full attainment of which should involve a considerable modification of Church services as frequently conducted.

While other aspects of religious life have been receiving attention, and advances made in various directions toward worthier methods of securing better results, the highest of all human exercises, the worship of God, has never in our

Church had the attention in our courts and counsels which is annually directed by Conference to matters of relatively minor importance.

As the order and conduct of the Sunday services have already been modified for the sake of the children, it may not be too daring to suggest that the reform needed in the conditions of public worship may be conditioned by the reflection that in ministering further to the young people in the congregation, the Church may also be bringing greater interest and benefit to those of riper years; at the same time discovering the rare art of helping the worshippers to attain that mental and spiritual sensibility which makes them more readily receptive of spiritual life. As an encouragement to hope in this connection, it should be remembered that Irish Methodist children, unlike many others, remain for the full Sunday service instead of leaving the church after listening to their own address, and if the conduct of that service sometimes tests the patience, and even piety, of the elect who are enjoined to "endure all things," there should be more thought for the feelings of young people whose staying power is less, but whose idealism is greater.

The factor of youth in the need for reform in the setting of the Sunday services is reinforced by other considerations. The activities and diversions of the secular week have so exploited and exhausted the sensibilities of the people that the eager mental alertness and responsiveness of former days are now seldom found in members of the average congregation. They do not bring with them to church the necessary degree of freshness and zest, and these must be created in them by the inspiration of the service.

All this may suggest an improvement on present procedure in many directions, including the following: The length of the ordinary service should be on the confines of the hour instead of the hour and a half; the sermon might be improved by compressing it into twenty minutes; the announcements of all "the usual" weekly meetings should be posted in the vestibule instead of continuing to drip drearily on ears that are tuned for better things, and exhausting the fire from heaven in the form of pulpit emotion needed for higher ends;

the value of selection and tone in the reading of the Scriptures should be remembered; an occasional moment of silence and meditation permitted at suitable stages; the mere affairs and business of the church eliminated, and the atmosphere of the place and demeanour of minister and people made contributory to the impression that "this is the House of God." To enter His courts from the glare of common day would then be an event; the transition from the outwardness to the inwardness of life would mark the most memorable moment of the week, and it would be easier for all to realise through their mental and spiritual being the impact of the unseen as they stood to attention in the presence of the King.

The effect of such an experience on the impressionable heart of youth can be paralleled by some no longer young, in memories hidden deep in the holy land of their being; memories of some far-off services from which they walked silently home until they had entered their room and shut the door.

YOUTH FINDING ITSELF

In former years the church life of our young people was bounded by the Sunday School and the Band of Hope, the conspicuous value of which was exemplified by the attendance of children of almost all Protestant denominations, though the time was not yet for the greater efficiency of teaching made possible by literary helps, teachers' training classes, and Sunday School Unions. The last quarter of a century has been marked by an ever-growing number of new developments which mark the transition from the time when the young had everything done for them by others to the new era when they found themselves responding to the call for self-expression, and exercising their various talents and tastes in their own movements and activities. The names of these organisations may sound strange and foreign in the language of our Canaan, but they are serving a high purpose in demonstrating that the legitimate tastes and aspirations of youth can be indulged on the inside of the boundary line which divides the church from the world without restricting their exercise, lowering their vitality, or damping their delight.

In the long list of these new comradeships and activities are some which are still in the experimental stage, though most of them have proved their value where church leaders have shown sufficient sanity to welcome and encourage them as an essential addendum to stated church work. We have here the "Boys' Brigade" with its "Life Boy Teams," "Bands," "Football Clubs," and "Old Boys' Associations"; the "Girl's Life Brigade" with its "Pioneers" and "Girl Cadets"; the "Girls' Guildery"; the "Girl Guides" with their "Brownies" and "Rangers"; the "Boy Scouts" with their "Wolf Cubs" and "Rovers"; the Badminton, Tennis and Hockey Clubs; and on a plane of their own, the "Temperance Science Classes," the "Bible Reading Association," the "Young Worshippers' League," "the Girls' League" and the "Young Laymen's League" for Missionary effort, and the noble activities of the Christian Endeavour Societies which have changed the whole character of many of the churches.

To the superficial observer some of these modern movements of youth may have their principal significance in the realm of the spectacular, but their value has been potent and pervasive in an incalculable degree. They have freshened the atmosphere and outlook of the Church, invested its week-night programme with an interest and popularity which have given a healthy thrill to many public meetings, and given fresh suggestions of the inclusiveness of the Kingdom of Christ.

The loyalty of junior Methodism has been manifest in the way it has dovetailed itself into the life and service of the Church. Like a happy warrior in the hour of need, it has given eager response to every call made upon it, and opened many new avenues of service.

During the quarter of a century the vast increase in the Church's contributions to Home and Foreign Missions is due in some measure to the work of the juvenile collectors; medical missions abroad have long been supported through the Christian Endeavour Societies, and a new chapter has been opened in our annals by the work done by our own C.E. missionaries—Dr. Robin Booth, Dr. R. P. Hadden, whose names are enshrined in undying memory; Rev. Robert H.

Foster, B.A., D.C.M., whose work has been interrupted by ill-health, and Rev. Wilfred H. Stafford, B.A., B.Comm., who now represents Irish Methodist C.E. in Hyderabad.

Happy the young people with so many contacts, social, intellectual and spiritual; so varied that every aptitude is catered for, and so near the unresting heart of youth that young idealists dreaming of vocations may perchance turn toward them with the secret hope of life's fulfilment lying through and beyond them.

The Methodist Church in Ireland, the smallest of a great sisterhood, survives in conditions that might test the endurance of the strongest. Like the branch that runs over the wall, its fruit is gathered by other hands than its own, and it grows poor by making many rich. Not by the might or power of numbers, but by the Spirit of God, are its vitality and efficiency maintained, and that Spirit still brings dreams to the old and visions to the young. But the dreams are of remembered glories whose very brightness casts at times a shadow on the present, and the young men's visions beckon them too frequently beyond the horizon of Ireland, from forlorn outposts where few are left to strengthen weak hands and confirm feeble knees.

But while youth and age share a common experience in the glow that warmed Wesley's heart, the genius of Methodism will fuse their diverse gifts in the flame of Love Divine, and perpetuate the Methodist Church in Ireland, not for its own sake, nor for any smaller end than the spread of the Kingdom that has no frontiers.

VIII

IRISH METHODISM AND EDUCATION

REV. R. LEE COLE, M.A., B.D.

IN the newspapers which were published towards the end of the eighteenth century one may find now and again such advertisements as the following:—

WANTED—Young man as servant to gentleman: one who cannot read or write preferred. Apply, etc.

It seems strange to-day that illiteracy should ever have been a desirable qualification in anyone, yet, up to quite recent times there were many persons who believed that any form of education unfitted the lower classes for menial duties. It was gravely argued, even by the clergy, more often by the squire, that people ought to remain in the station of life to which it had pleased God to call them, and that education was a most unsettling thing. It was education which was alleged to have caused the French Revolution, the prevalent Deism in England, and the industrial unrest that followed the Napoleonic wars. Against this stupid allegation Methodism bore a definite testimony. The poor had as much right to read as the rich. They had minds and souls, if they had not moneys and lands. Therefore from the beginning Mr. Wesley aimed not only at evangelical conversion, but at mental awakening. He directed his evangelists to become teachers as well as preachers, and after his death, the Conference of 1795 gave definite pronouncement on the subject:—

“Let those parents who are members of our Society, and refuse without sufficient reason, to send their children to be instructed by the Preachers, be informed that the Conference looks upon their conduct as highly culpable, and can hardly consider them as proper members of a religious society.”

It was really inevitable that Methodism with its strong, almost fierce, insistence on the doctrines of universal guilt and universal atonement should be democratic. In the sight of God, classes and castes and divisions of society counted for nothing; all men were alike—sinners needing salvation. Moreover, the Class Meeting developed this democratic idea. All men were brethren when they met in class. The Leader might be a labourer or a cobbler, and among the members there might be doctors, bankers and merchants, but all were brethren and addressed each other as “Brother” and “Sister.” Therefore the Methodists lent no countenance to the doctrine that education was a prerogative of a privileged class. They did not believe in privileged classes. The men and women who gathered into the Methodist Societies were in the main, though not exclusively, drawn from the poorer and unlettered sections of the community. This cannot be considered as an indictment against early Methodism; it was to the same class of people that early Christianity chiefly appealed. “Not many mighty, not many noble were called.” When the people got converted and got enrolled in a Class Meeting, their experience stimulated them intellectually as well as spiritually. The first thing a new convert would desire would be to read the Bible for himself, and often the Class Leaders were compelled to provide means of education for their illiterate members.

Mr. Wesley not only urged the duty of education on his followers, to some extent also he sought to make provision for their intellectual needs. He established several schools, such as that near Bristol for the sons of preachers, that at Kingswood for the colliers, another for the poor around the London Foundry, and another for the orphans of Newcastle. He was also pioneer in the publication of cheap literature. He published text-books, grammars and various items of good literature at a penny apiece, mostly intended for use in schools and by the preachers. He joined with Dr. Coke in starting the first Tract Society in 1782, and he has to his name a list of over four hundred publications, the majority of which were educational.

It cannot be said, however, that in Mr. Wesley's time any very great advance in education was inaugurated in Ireland. The difficulties in his way were considerable. One legal difficulty was that no person was permitted to teach school children who had not signed the Thirty-nine Articles. This restriction was intended to create a monopoly of education for the Established Church. It prevented Roman Catholics from having schools, but it applied equally to, and was strongly enforced against Dissenters. The chief way in which the English Church had met its responsibilities was by establishing in several parts of Ireland what were known as Charter Schools, the purpose of which was to proselytize rather than to educate. They quickly sank into desolation, and Mr. Wesley's Journal gives evidence of the appalling condition into which they had sunk in 1785. Another difficulty arose from the fact that very few persons could be found who had sufficient literary qualifications to instruct the young. Lord Macaulay, referring to the ordinary schoolmasters of the beginning of the nineteenth century, spoke of them as "discarded footmen and ruined pedlars," and his description was not much exaggerated. Any person who was able to teach the "Three R's" in the most elementary fashion was considered good enough to be employed. Nor was school equipment of any kind thought necessary; a Horn Book, containing the alphabet, the Lord's prayer, the numerals and a few simple words, was sufficient. Most of the teaching was by rote and few children had more than two years of it.

In spite of these difficulties, it is significant to find the historian, Mr. John Richard Green, declaring that the movement initiated by Mr. Wesley "gave the first impulse to popular education." From one standpoint this is hardly surprising. Mr. Wesley himself was an Oxford Don, one who never forgot how after leaving Charterhouse School, he became a Scholar of Christ Church, a Fellow of Lincoln, a Moderator and a Lecturer in Greek. In his long journeys through Ireland he always carried books which he scattered broadcast, and he rarely omitted an opportunity of conversing with the children in the houses in which he was an honoured guest. It cannot be said that he understood children, but he

loved them and had the art of winning their love, and he stamped these qualities on his helpers. "Spend an hour a week with the children in every large town"—was his rule for them—"Whether you like children or not, talk with them every time you see any at home." Thus there was stamped on the Methodist Church from the beginning a respect for and a desire of learning, which grew with the passing of years and the unfolding of new opportunities.

The Education Policy of Irish Methodism has never been thought out formally, nor are the principles which are involved the result of logical processes of thought. At the same time it is not a haphazard policy, it has grown up with practical needs, and is determined to a large extent by the conditions of Irish life. It cannot be understood apart from Irish history, and is determined to some extent by the position which the Methodist Church holds among other denominations.

The first opportunity which came for putting its principles into action arose in Dublin. When the Whitefriar Street Chapel and premises were built in 1750-2, part of the ground was set apart for a free school, which was built some years later: at the back of the Chapel there was built a teacher's residence, and the school was attended by forty boys, who were taught free of charge. For some years the school met in the lobby or gallery of the Chapel, but in 1791 a proper schoolroom was built. The best known of its teachers was Mr. Roger Lamb, who for nearly forty years superintended it with great faithfulness. He had been a paymaster-sergeant in the 9th Regiment of Foot in the army of Lord Cornwallis, and had been in several important battles in the American War in 1780 and 1781. He was taken prisoner, but escaped, and returned to Dublin in 1784 as Colonel's orderly. He came into contact with the Methodists and was converted under the preaching of Mr. Wesley. Having been fairly well educated, he left the army and began to teach a small school. In 1793 he was appointed Master of the Free School, Whitefriar Street, at the salary of £60 a year. His diaries and some of his schoolbooks have been preserved and reveal him to have been an intelligent, devout, and simplehearted

man, a model, too, as he was the pioneer of all Irish Methodist teachers. The next important venture made by Irish Methodists in education was led by Rev. Adam Clarke, LL.D. Dr. Clarke was a marvellous scholar who valued learning as a gift of God. Finding the people of his native district of North Antrim to be in gross ignorance, he established half a dozen schools. For these he was personally responsible for a time, but before his death they were transferred to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. These Mission Schools greatly increased in number and were worked as a sort of Foreign Missionary enterprise. The buildings were very poor and the teachers were often miserably paid, but they filled a want and did a notable work. So valuable was this work that the British Conference in its address to the Irish Conference in 1831 applauded "the vigour with which you have prosecuted the education of the children of the poor in forming so many schools, which under the excellent discipline you observe have prospered beyond expectation."

In 1842 the Wesleyan School Society for Ireland was formed and Rev. W. O. Croggon was appointed General Superintendent of the schools. In the same year the British Conference acknowledged that in the matter of education the Irish Methodists had led the way for England.

In the year 1832 the Board of National Education had been formed for Ireland by Act of Parliament, and schools began to improve and multiply. At first the system met with strong opposition, specially as regards the place of religion in the schools. Denominational barriers were high and each Church was most zealous in inculcating its own special tenets. The Commissioners led for many years a most uneasy life, and doubtless they made many blunders, but it should be set to their credit that they did much to solve the thorny problem of denominational education. The solution took years to find; it was indefensible in theory, and unparalleled in practice, except in Germany, but it gave satisfaction to all creeds. Provision was made in the regulations for united secular instruction and separate religious instruction. While the schools were nominally undenominational in so far that any child of any religion could be received as a pupil, they really

were denominational because the initiative of providing the school building and maintaining it was thrown on the Churches, which naturally sought to manage them as far as possible in their own interests. The managers generally succeeded in getting teachers appointed who professed their own creed, and the schools became known locally as Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic or Methodist Schools. For a time the Methodists had held aloof from this arrangement. They had a considerable number of mission schools of their own, and managed to pay the teachers out of Connexional and other funds. But wiser counsels at last prevailed, and in the year 1860 the Church decided to take the fullest advantage of the National Education system; a General Education Fund Committee was appointed by Conference and a new era of education was begun.

An important change in Irish Methodism was almost coincident with this change of educational policy. It has been mentioned that previous to 1861, the Mission Schools as well as the Mission Stations, were under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and were supervised by a representative of that society. In this office Rev. W. O. Croggon was followed by Rev. Jesse Pilcher. In 1861, however, new arrangements were made by which the Irish Mission Stations were assimilated with the circuits of the Irish Conference. At the same time the Mission Schools were also handed over, and Rev. Gibson McMillen, an honoured Irish minister, was appointed to superintend them. This change of policy had far-reaching consequences. It threw on the Irish Conference the responsibility for providing for the upkeep of nearly a hundred schools, and paying the salaries of more than a hundred teachers. As might be expected, the Conference took the proper path of asking the superintendents to transfer their schools to the control of the National Board. A considerable number were at once transferred, and the money so set free was devoted to the promotion of further new Mission Schools.

But a deeper consequence of the changed conditions was that an extraordinary enthusiasm for education swept Irish Methodism in the "sixties", of last century. In 1865

there were 50 Methodist Schools under the National Board, and 48 Mission Schools in addition. The Census Returns of 1861 showed that the lowest rate of illiteracy in the country was among the Methodist. Whereas 45 per cent. of the Roman Catholics could neither read nor write, the corresponding Methodist figure was 9 per cent. This enthusiasm for education was seen not only in the schools opened and maintained, but in the very considerable sums of money raised and expended for building, repairs, equipment, appliances, teachers' salaries, rents, etc. In the year 1839 the Centenary of Methodism Fund had been raised, and from this a sum of £6,000 was set apart for education in Ireland. The Fund for the Extension of Wesleyan Agency in Ireland in 1858 devoted a further sum of £3,000 to the same purpose. But the great bulk of the income came from the Methodist people year by year in the collections made for Education. They had a zeal for learning which was as great almost as their zeal for piety.

It would be difficult to estimate the reflex benefit which these primary schools have brought to Irish Methodism. At least it may be said that successive Governments in Ireland have looked on the Methodist Church as standing for high educational ideals, and that we have received much praise and a share of honour for our achievement. But it is more to the point that we have had the consciousness of doing something "worth while." We have had the conviction that education was a valuable contribution which even a small Church could bring to the larger community. In making that contribution, our Church has found itself steadied, developed, matured, and blessed.

Frequently the Conference has addressed requests or remonstrances to the Government, and its voice has always been heard with respect by those in authority. In one matter, however, it claimed a recognition which for many years was denied. Successive appeals were made to have appointed on the Board of National Education a Methodist Commissioner. It was not, however, till the year 1890 that the request was granted and the Rev. Henry Evans, D.D., was appointed. Through a period of over twenty years he wielded a most

valuable influence, not merely on behalf of the Methodist Church, but in the cause of sound educational methods. When he retired he was followed on the Board by the Rev. William Henry Smyth, M.A.

Another demand made in the "sixties" by the Methodist Church was to have an institution under Methodist auspices for the training of teachers. When the first Training College was opened by the Commissioners, there were forty Wesleyan students in training, a number far in excess of the proportion of Methodists in the general population of the country. The Methodist Church had indeed a training college of its own for Mission School teachers, in Hardwicke Street, Dublin, and it did excellent work for many years until it closed in 1872; but it was not found feasible by the Government to give Methodists a proper training college of their own. One can see now that a better thing was done: the candidates for the schools were all trained at a central training institution in Marlboro' Street, Dublin, and received pastoral care and catechetical instruction from Methodist chaplains. Since the founding of the Irish Free State, an arrangement has been made by which Methodist candidates receive their training in the Church of Ireland Training College at Kildare Place, Dublin. The teachers in training in Northern Ireland are similarly educated in the Stranmillis College, Belfast.

Two other educational needs arose, however, in the course of time. One was the education of men for the ministry, the other was the provision of what is called secondary education.

In 1839 a committee was appointed by the Conference to meet certain gentlemen for consultation concerning the desirability of establishing a grammar school. The effect was that in 1845 the Wesleyan Connexional School was opened on Stephen's Green S., Dublin. Accommodation was provided for 100 boarders and 200 day boys, and a minister was appointed governor and chaplain. It was a great success. In its life of over thirty years it produced many eminent men; among those who were educated at it were Sir Robert Hart, of China, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Harry Furniss. Soon, however, the premises became too small, and

a larger site at the side and rear of the Centenary Church was acquired. On this was built Wesley College at a cost of £24,000. The school was opened in 1879, and though for many years it was hampered by debt, it has more than justified the efforts and gifts involved in providing such an institution.

After twenty years of history as a boys' school, its Governors wisely opened it as a co-educational institution, and in recent years it has had a long run of gratifying prosperity joined to eminent usefulness.

In the early sixties of last century the city of Belfast made great progress, both in wealth and numbers. The boom in the linen trade and in the building of ships altered Belfast from being a market town to a considerable city. Its merchants desired suitable secondary education for their sons and daughters, and the project of establishing another secondary school was begun. There was much support for the project; it appealed to Methodists in this and other lands. The new institution was to educate ministers' sons and (later) ministers' daughters. It was also to educate sons and daughters of laymen. It was to be a great educational place for all standards from kindergarten up to University degree standards. It was also to include a department for the training of candidates for the ministry. If anything, the plan was a little too comprehensive; even the buildings were a trifle grandiose, for they sacrificed something of utility to appearance. But it was a scheme with faith and adventure in it and it won through to success. Reference will be made to it presently.

The other pressing need of those years was some means of training candidates for the ministry. It was a principle of Irish Methodism that the preachers were chosen for their piety rather than for their intellectual attainments, but once they were accepted as preachers Mr. Wesley never ceased to insist that they should give themselves diligently to self-culture. He wrote vigorous and, at times, stinging words to those who neglected their studies. He demanded of his preachers that they should give five hours every day to books. They were not to be satisfied only with reading the Bible.

"Look," he said, "at George Bell. He refused to read anything but the Bible. Now he reads neither the Bible nor anything else."

Even so far back as the year 1744 the question was asked at Conference, "Can we have a Seminary for Labourers?" To which it is replied, "If God spare us to another Conference." The following year the subject is resumed, when the "Seminary for Labourers" is deferred, "till God give us a proper tutor." The lack of such an institution Mr. Wesley endeavoured to meet by mapping out a course of study and extended theological reading to be pursued by his "helpers." It was the best arrangement possible at the time, and it was not without some measure of success. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Mr. Wesley could boast that in his opinion the Methodist preachers were as well educated as the bulk of candidates presenting themselves for ordination in the Anglican Church; but after Mr. Wesley's death there was no man who could act so vigorously as he did, not to say dictatorially. Further, it was growing impossible for ministers to get education once they had been appointed to circuits, and education they must have, if they were to face congregations from which illiteracy was fast disappearing. The ministers must be educated before they went out on circuit. Already the need was being met in England: two colleges had been opened, one at Didsbury in 1842, and the other at Richmond in the following year. The Irish Conference decided that it could not lag behind. A legacy of £1,000 had been left to the Irish Conference by Mr. Mason of Dublin for the education of ministers. This sum was handed over to the British Conference, and so Ireland became entitled to have four students each year at the English theological colleges. It was never a perfectly satisfactory plan, and when the establishment of the Methodist College was being undertaken a powerful motive was at work in the expectation that we would be able to train our own preachers on Irish soil. The scheme, however, required a huge sum of money, and it is amazing to read of the success with which the effort was completed. In 1863 the Wesleyan Missionary Society celebrated its jubilee, and an Extension Fund was raised.

The Irish contribution to the fund was £9,421. As Ireland was itself regarded at the time as a Foreign Mission Station, the amount was left in the hands of the Irish Conference, by whom it was applied in aid of the erection of the Methodist College. A grant had already been made to this institution from the Fund for the Increase of Wesleyan Agency in Ireland (1855), but as a much larger sum was needed to complete the building, an appeal was made in 1870, which resulted in contributions amounting to £20,000, including about £1,500 from America, and nearly £2,000 from a bazaar. The entire cost of the building and furnishing was upwards of £37,000. An Endowment Fund of over £20,000 was also raised, towards which United States and Canada contributed £9,239, and English friends £9,643. The College was opened on August 19th, 1868, and had as its President, Rev. William Arthur, M.A. The Rev. Robinson Scott, D.D., was Theological Tutor, and the Rev. Robert Crook, LL.D., was Headmaster. Twenty years later, taking advantage of the Endowed Schools Commission, the College was granted a scheme and was placed under the management of Governors who were constituted a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal.

An important development took place in 1890, when the McArthur Hall, a residence hostel for girl students, was opened, being provided by the generosity of Sir William McArthur, K.C.M.G., an Irish Methodist who had been Lord Mayor of London. Thirty years later it was found that the original idea of the College had to be modified. The increasing demand for accommodation of the School, necessitated the segregation of the Theological Department, which found a home for itself at Edgehill College. The dual headship of President and Headmaster had also to disappear in accordance with modern ideas of education. The College is now a large secondary school, the largest Protestant school in Ireland, and one of the largest in the British Isles, with over 1,000 pupils on roll. In the year 1928 an Act of Parliament was got in Northern Ireland by which the School and the Theological departments were separated, and the two institutions have each started on a new chapter of their story.

It is somewhat wonderful that a comparatively small Church like Irish Methodism should support two of the chief educational institutions in Ireland, but it is the result of the stress which the Church has laid since Mr. Wesley's days on the wise combination of piety and learning. There is scarcely a corner of the habitable world to-day in which one will not find old pupils of "Methody" and "Wesley" leading honourable and useful lives and helping on human progress. Year by year in the universities pupils of these Colleges win high honours and climb to fame, while a considerable number of them are to be found in the ministry of the Methodist and other Churches.

The Edgehill College has already begun to create its own history. Until the year 1919 the building was a private residence in very pleasant surroundings, with tennis courts and extensive gardens. It was purchased in that year by the Governors of Methodist College, and the Theological Department was transferred to it. But it was not properly equipped for its work as a training institution for the required number of students, and for the necessary staffs. A lecture hall, a library, several classrooms, dormitories, etc., had therefore to be added. These extensions were completed in 1926, and the College is now admirably adapted for its work. The total cost was something about £10,000.

The funds for the upkeep of the College come from two main channels. There are theological endowments of over £20,000 created by past generations of Methodists. There is also a yearly collection taken in all Circuits on behalf of the Ministerial Training Fund. This collection was formerly taken for the General Education Fund, but when Methodist primary schools in Northern Ireland began to be transferred to the Ministry of Education under the terms of the Education Act of 1923, there was no longer the same need for an annual collection for the upkeep of National Schools and the Conference wisely turned over the annual appeal to the Edgehill College.

Before closing this chapter, however, it is necessary to turn back again to the subject of primary education for a little. While the system of National Education remains, as

formerly, in the Irish Free State, very considerable changes have taken place in education in Northern Ireland. The aim of the Northern Parliament has been to bring education under popular control. An Education Act was passed in 1923 by which schools are now partially financed from the rates. Local education authorities and committees have been set up with wide powers. New regulations have been made regarding school attendance, and regarding the employment of children and young persons. Provision has also been made for the medical inspection and treatment of school children, as well as for the feeding of necessitous or neglected children. Provision has also been made for the suitable education of afflicted children. New salary scales, and new arrangements regarding superannuation have been set up for teachers. The Act was thus one of wide scope, and for the most part was most timely. It was left to the decision of the Churches concerned whether they should or should not transfer their schools to the education authorities. The conditions of transfer did not at first commend themselves to the Churches, especially on the thorny ground of unsatisfactory arrangements for religious instruction. Amending Acts were passed, however, in 1925 and 1930, and under the newer conditions the majority of Methodist schools in Northern Ireland have been transferred. As the case now stands it is governed by sections 26, 27, 28, 29 of the Act of 1923, and by Sections 4 and 5 of the Amending Act of 1930. Powers have been given by these sections to the Local Committees for School Management to make provision for religious instruction. Representatives of those Churches which in the first instance provided the school buildings must also be given a place on the Regional Committees. Teachers are also directed to give simple Bible instruction in the schools, according to an agreed programme which has been drawn up by the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist Churches.

The struggle to win these arrangements has not been an easy one, and in the contest the Methodist Church has been fortunate to be represented by the Treasurer of the General Education Fund, the Rev. William Henry Smyth, M.A., but the situation is one that requires and will require careful

watching for some years to come. One main issue of the controversy is that the Protestants of the North of Ireland are determined to maintain simple Bible teaching in all elementary schools; a second issue is that under no circumstances shall schools built by Protestant moneys be permitted to come under the control of local committees which may happen to be predominantly Roman Catholic.

One incident in connection with the changes in education in Northern Ireland should be mentioned. In 1926 the Circuit authorities of the Ballynafeigh Church, desirous of closing the National School which was conducted at the rear of the church and on their property, in order to use the premises for congregational purposes, found themselves involved in a long and costly law suit with the Education Ministry and the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry claimed the right to retain the buildings as school premises. After several hearings in various Courts the decision of the Ulster Court of Appeal was given unanimously in favour of the Trustees of Ballynafeigh Church.

In the Free State the changes that have taken place have been mostly along the lines of encouraging Irish ideals in education. It is now compulsory to have the Irish language taught in all schools. Methodists have no antagonism to the Irish language; they have had a long succession of Irish scholars in their Ministry, they have utilised it as a means of preaching the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen; but they are not convinced that as an educational policy it is wise to force Irish on all children, or to emphasize it above other languages and other more useful subjects. They have, however, loyally fallen in with the newer programmes, and they recognise with satisfaction that Methodist students are able to hold their own in the new conditions. It is also satisfactory to find that from members of our Church, modern Irish literature has received some valuable contributions.

A notable change has taken place in recent years also in the course of University education. The Queen's Colleges, which were the constituent colleges of the Royal University of Ireland (founded in 1880), have undergone a change. The Colleges in Dublin, Cork and Galway now form the National

University of Ireland and have begun to create a culture of their own, more specifically Irish than formerly. The Queen's College of Belfast has become the Queen's University and has likewise undergone a considerable development and expansion. It wields a powerful influence in Northern Ireland, and is maintaining a fine ideal of education. It is a satisfaction to find that in the institution Methodists like Sir William Whitla, M.D.; Professor James A. Lindsay, M.D., and Dr. A. C. Dixon, D.Sc., have added lustre not only to the Northern University, but also to our Church. The expectation is that in days to come the link between our Theological College and the University in Belfast will be strengthened. Both in Belfast University and in Dublin University (Trinity College) it is remarkable that year by year a goodly share of the highest honours come to the sons and daughters of our Methodist people, and a calculation may easily be made which shows that no denomination in the country does more for the maintenance of higher education in the Universities than does the Methodist people.

On the general policy of the Methodist Church regarding education, it may be added that the Methodist people are convinced that mere secularity in schools is likely to damage moral character. Once morals are cut loose from religion and from the powerful sanction which religion alone can supply, we are driven back on weaker lines of support that are difficult to defend. They believe that no system of morals will retain its authority, and guide conduct apart from the sanctions which religion alone can supply. As Methodists, we might not choose a sectarian atmosphere for education, but we would certainly demand a religious atmosphere. Ireland is at heart a religious country, and if a choice had to be made it would certainly be our policy to retain some elements of sectarian education rather than to offer a premium to secularism.

The future of education in Ireland cannot be foretold. Some measure of the secularism which has rooted itself in England and America is to be found in our island. Young people are more than ever prone to follow false gods. Like the foolish son of the Vicar of Wakefield, they are selling a

good horse for a gross of green spectacles. Like the children of Hamelin, they are rushing after a Pied Piper of pleasure whose music is only a lure to tragedy. Like Esau, they are tempted to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. It will be a disaster if the Church loses what hold it has on the educational forces of the land. Old fashions of teaching are gone and new ideas have to be assimilated: but an even bigger task lies before us—to inspire the education of Ireland with ideals of righteousness, and with principles that are distinctively Christian.

IX

IRISH METHODISM AND SOCIAL SERVICE.

REV. J. N. SPENCE.

IN the work of social amelioration and uplifting Irish Methodism has reflected in as high a degree the spirit of Wesley as in its spiritual ministries. The survey of the numerous and varied agencies for social service which it called into existence prior to the year 1859 to be found in Crookshank's "History of Methodism in Ireland" proves how quickly and powerfully the social conscience was developed.

This article is more particularly concerned with the development of social services in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The later years of the nineteenth century were marked by a great forward movement in British Methodism. Under the inspiration of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A., the Central Missions, which have proved such a force in the religious, social and philanthropic life of the great cities in the past fifty years, were inaugurated. Irish Methodism quickly caught the enthusiasm of the time and Missions were established in Belfast, Dublin and Londonderry.

As it is largely round these Missions and the agencies referred to above, that most of the social work of the Church for the past forty years has gathered, it will be more convenient to review the work of the Missions as a whole and without regard to the chronological order of the development of other social agencies which were taking place.

THE BELFAST CENTRAL MISSION was established by the Rev. R. Crawford Johnson, D.D., in 1889. He proved an ideal leader, combining a fervour for social service with a passionate evangelism. From the beginning special attention was

given to the physical needs of the poor. As the years passed the social ministries of the Mission were developed to meet the needs of the time. Thus, in times of acute distress Cheap and Free Food Depôts were opened in different districts of the city and wholesome food supplied either free or at a merely nominal price. In recent years as many as forty thousand free meals have been given in the course of a single winter. At one period a Labour Yard was run, providing employment for over a score of men. Relief in the form of groceries, coal, clothing and other necessities is constantly distributed on a wide scale.

On Sunday evenings large number of the poorest men of the city gather in Grosvenor Hall and are given a warm meal, which is followed by a brief service. The poorest women are also ministered to in large numbers. The Mission has a long record of men, women, and even children, rescued from grave moral peril.

From the first the Mission has given a special place to the children of the slums, and was one of the pioneers of that modern attitude towards such children which has meant so much for the health of the race. On Sunday afternoons hundreds of these little ones are taught and fed. Classes and clubs, both for instruction and recreation, are held for their benefit. At Christmas time two thousand five hundred are entertained. Daily, the year round, the work of caring for, feeding and clothing the children is carried on. Each summer for almost forty years from two to three thousand have been taken for a day at the seaside. It was soon seen that many of them required a longer holiday. A cottage was taken and furnished as a Holiday Home. This was soon superseded by a larger building which was also quickly outgrown.

An important development of the work amongst the children took place in 1915. It was found that there were many children whose fathers had either been killed in action or were on active service, and whose mothers either for physical or moral reasons were proving to be unfit guardians.

The condition of these children was causing the authorities much anxiety. A Home where they could be sheltered was a pressing need, but none was available. With characteristic energy and forethought, the Rev. R. M. Ker, then Superintendent of the Mission, turned the Mission's Holiday Home into a Home for these children. It was at once filled; additional premises were secured, and even then a large number placed under the care of the Mission had to be boarded out. The records show that over five hundred children were committed to the care of the Mission during the war. When the war was over it was thought the need for the Home would pass, but it was found necessary to keep it open to enable the Mission to rightly help some at least of the many destitute and orphan children with whom it is constantly being brought into touch.

In 1928 this branch of the work received a fresh impetus and the opportunity of much wider service through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Turtle, who bought Templepatrick House and grounds near Millisle, Co. Down, and presented them to the Mission for the work amongst the children. They also bore the cost of remodelling the existing house and making it suitable for an Orphanage with accommodation for thirty-five children. In another part of the grounds a Holiday Home, accommodating sixty children, has been built, the whole colony being most appropriately named "Childhaven."

An important part of the social work of the Mission has been a successful endeavour to provide a counter-attraction to the public-house and questionable forms of entertainment. While still without a home the Mission ran popular entertainments of a high class at nominal admission charges on Saturday evenings during the winter. All through the years these entertainments have retained their popularity. In recent years it has been quite a usual thing for eighty thousand people to be present at them in a single winter.

THE DUBLIN CENTRAL MISSION was established in 1893, with the Rev. William Crawford, M.A., as its first Superin-

tendent. The headquarters of the Mission are the former Primitive Methodist premises in South Great George's Street and here under successive Superintendents for thirty-eight years a splendid work of spiritual quickening and social service has been carried on.

The relief of those in need has been widely and wisely practised, the Mission's work in this sphere winning both the sympathy and support of those differing widely from it in creed. Thrift clubs have been vigorously worked and have helped to create a spirit of independence and self-help that is much to be desired.

It is well known that many of the poorest inhabitants of Dublin live in tenements. A feature of such life, even in spite of the frequent overcrowding, is its loneliness, particularly for elderly folk. There are many reasons for this, physical, social and religious. It is just here that some of the best work of the Mission, and especially of the Sisters, has been done. It is not alone the temporal help they bring, but, just as much the Christian sympathy and love which give to many lives fresh hope and strength.

Perhaps the gravest charge to be brought against the tenement system as it so often exists, is its menace to the moral and physical welfare of the child. The noxious air which so often pervades such buildings is deadly to child life. With a view to counteracting this weakening influence the Mission began its Children's Holiday Work in 1915, when parties of little ones were boarded out in cottages in the country or by the sea. The value of the work was at once apparent—the change in the condition of the children being little short of marvellous. A start having thus been made, in the following year a house was rented in Skerries, most of the Methodist congregations in the city and some individual friends assumed the responsibility for the furnishing, and here for several years the work was carried on.

Under the guidance of the Rev. Lindsay H. Cullen this work developed greatly and ultimately a much more suitable and commodious house was bought and furnished, where the work has been carried on on a much bigger scale and greatly

to the benefit of the children who are fortunate enough to enjoy its ministry. The Mission also seeks to bring the joy of Christmas to the little ones, and on Christmas Night George's Hall is crowded with the children of the slum tenements.

In the early days the Mission sought by means of popular concerts, on Saturday nights, to counteract the dangerous allurements of the streets or places of questionable amusement. Owing to the difficulties involved in carrying these on, they were discontinued for a time. In recent years, through the agency of the cinematograph, they have been revived and attract crowded audiences of young people.

Another interesting feature is the recreational club. The school-room has been equipped as a Badminton Hall and is most successful in attracting many young people and providing them with healthy recreation in helpful surroundings.

THE NORTH BELFAST MISSION was founded in 1897 by the Rev. William Maguire. Its headquarters was the old Frederick Street Chapel. Later the New Connexion Chapel in York Street was acquired, and when remodelled, called the People's Hall, and this is now the headquarters of the Mission.

The social work follows along the lines which experience has shown to be the most effective. Situated in the midst of one of the poorest districts of the city, much thought and care are given to the help of those in distress. This work is done on a large scale and in a most efficient manner. A great deal of what has already been said of the Belfast Central Mission is applicable to this Mission also.

On Sunday mornings at an early hour a large company of adults and children, many of them from the common lodging houses, gather at the Mission and are given a warm, substantial breakfast free of cost.

This Mission has also given a special place to the poor children. Classes and clubs of various kinds, both for boys and girls, are held, whilst a very varied and comprehensive ministry is carried on the year round on their behalf. At

Christmas about two thousand are entertained, and in summer a like number are taken for a day of delight by the sea.

In recent years special attention has been given to providing holidays for the most needy children. At first this work was carried on in a cottage at Ballywalter, Co. Down, but this soon proved to be altogether inadequate to meet the need. Through the energy of the Rev. W. Johnstone Hunter a large and splendidly equipped Holiday Home was built near Donaghadee and opened in 1927. The Home has accommodation for sixty children. Each summer well over one thousand little ones from the poorest districts of the city are given a week's healthful holiday.

For a number of years the Mission provided a popular entertainment on Saturday nights for the people of the neighbourhood, but for a variety of reasons this was discontinued.

THE LONDONDERRY CITY MISSION, founded in 1894 by Rev. P. E. Donovan, has also an honourable record of social service, though of necessity on a smaller scale than that of the Missions already mentioned. It has, however, given abundant proof of its power to adapt itself to the peculiar social needs with which it has been confronted from time to time, and with gracious results.

It must not be thought that *all* the social work of the Church has been done by the Missions. Circuits and individual churches, particularly in the crowded areas, have prosecuted varied and most necessary social ministries with success. An illustration of this is found in the history of the Falls Road Church, Belfast, where, during the ministry of the Rev. William J. Christie, a medical clinic and dispensary were successfully run, accomplishing much good work, and this is but one of many efforts.

In Dublin the need of a shelter, different from the common lodging-houses for men, where not only their physical needs but their moral and spiritual interests would be ministered to, had been felt for some time, and in 1893 a company of citizens, for the most part Methodists, resolved to try and

meet this need. Suitable premises in Poolbeg Street were secured and a shelter opened, which has proved to be a veritable door of hope to many. Later a similar shelter for women was opened in St. James Street. It would be difficult to think of a work more practical or Christlike than that which has been carried on at these centres.

Although, as already stated, the shelters are not specifically Methodist institutions, both in their inception and in their working they owe so much to the members of the Church that they cannot be overlooked in a chronicle of Methodist social service.

CRAIGMORE CHILDREN'S HOME for orphan and needy children came into being in 1902, when Mr. T. Foulkes Shillington gave the family residence near Aghalee, together with the farm of one hundred and forty-five acres, for the purpose.

The Home, which can accommodate forty boys, has fulfilled the hopes of its generous donor. Former inmates have made good both at home and across the seas. At least one old boy is to be found in the Christian ministry, whilst others have risen to high places in the world of commerce.

When the National Health Insurance Act came into force, a Methodist Benefit Society was formed, and had a successful career until the political division of the country so interfered with its operations that it was deemed wiser to transfer its members to some of the larger Societies.

Through the Dublin Methodist Council the Church has done one of its best post-war bits of social service. Impressed and disturbed by the great hardships caused through the shortage of houses for the working classes and the poor in the Dublin area, the Council after careful consideration, appointed a Housing Committee to deal with the matter. This Committee bestirred itself so effectively that it induced the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland to invest £16,500, and other subscribers to invest £6,210, in Housing

Stock, thus helping in a very practical manner to solve a pressing problem and earning the right to nominate tenants for twenty-nine houses.

The exigencies of space have prevented the enumeration of many separate agencies of social service which the Church has called into being, but enough has been said to show that Irish Methodism is true to its traditions and that its social conscience is still strong enough to make it respond, either in sections or as a whole, to the special needs of the circumstances and of the day.

X

IRISH METHODISM AND ITS FORWARD MOVEMENTS.

REV. W. H. SMYTH, M.A.

TOWARDS the close of the nineteenth century many were led to reflect upon the wonderful hundred years nearing completion. The century had been made memorable by remarkable advances in knowledge of the world and its resources and in the mastery of the powers of nature, but not least in importance had been the multiplied and varied services of the Christian Church. Great strides had been made towards the evangelisation of mankind, for doors had been opened everywhere, methods of work tested, organisation perfected, languages learned and reduced to writing, translations of the Holy Scriptures given in many tongues. Shrinkage of time and space in dealing with distant peoples had been secured, so that a new era for mankind had begun. The opportunities presented for a decided step forward on the part of the Church were numerous and clamorous, so that all Christian denominations were faced with great responsibilities if the imperative summons of the new century to advance was not to be disregarded.

It occurred to Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P. (afterwards Sir Robert Perks, Bart.), that British Methodism should show its gratitude for its marvellous past and its duty towards the beckoning future by raising a fund of one million guineas for the extension of its work at home and abroad. The million guineas were to represent one million names to be inscribed on an Historic Roll and preserved as a permanent memorial of the thankfulness and zeal of "The People called Methodists." The magnitude, daring and ingenuity of the proposal captured the imagination and heart of Methodism, and after much consideration the scheme known as "The

Twentieth Century Fund" was launched and in due time brought to a triumphant conclusion.

It was widely felt that Irish Methodism should share in this great enterprise, not only because of the signal blessings bestowed upon its work, but also because of the opportunities in Ireland that the new period presented for immediate effort in many directions. Accordingly at the Conference in 1898 the proposal introduced by Mr. Richard W. Booth to raise an "Irish Twentieth Century Fund" of not less than 50,000 guineas was heartily approved and a Committee appointed to consider the methods by which this sum should be raised and the objects to which the money should be devoted. This Committee was to co-operate with the Committee of Management in September, and if it received its endorsement, then it was to inaugurate the Fund and report to the Conference in 1899. Decisions had to be taken rapidly as the sands of the century were fast running out, and so it was deemed advisable to begin the undertaking which urgently challenged without delay. Consequently this joint Committee decided that throughout the connexion special sermons should be preached on the second Sunday of 1899 to explain the proposals to the people and to prepare them for central District Conventions which would be held subsequently. It was hoped that at these Conventions the circuits would be prepared to indicate the extent of their contributions to the Fund.

The general purposes contemplated were to strengthen and extend aggressive agencies in the country and in cities, to increase the efforts and effectiveness of existing institutions and to develop work on behalf of orphan and needy children.

The 8th January, 1899, witnessed a very general and hearty acknowledgment of God's goodness to the Church and a determination to hearken to the calls of the future. As the scheme was more and more discussed the more enthusiasm for it grew.

The first District Convention was held in Dublin on the 19th January, 1899, in the Centenary Church, Stephen's Green. Meetings were held in the forenoon for Ministers, in the afternoon for Christian workers, and in the evening a great public gathering took place, with Mr. Robert Booth presiding.

At this meeting 17,380 guineas were promised from the majority of the Circuits in the District, headed by Stephen's Green with 12,000 guineas. Towards this amount Mr. Robert Booth contributed 5,000 guineas and his brother, Mr. Richard Booth, a similar sum. Each contributed 1,000 guineas additional at a later period. With this auspicious beginning it was felt the success of the scheme was assured, especially as a few days later Belfast District promised 12,000 guineas, followed by Cork with over 3,000 guineas. These sums were subsequently increased when Circuits which were unable to report had completed their collections.

Conventions of a similar character were held over the entire connexion and were marked not only by remarkable liberality and self-sacrifice, but by great spiritual earnestness and deep devotional feeling. Rich and poor rose to the occasion, contributions came from the humblest, and all rejoiced to share in a movement that was filling the Church with gladness and hope. Whereas former great connexional appeals were mainly supported by the comparatively few, this effort elicited the practical help of every class. Its democratic character of one guinea for one name made a widespread appeal. So general and enthusiastic was the response that there was a very perceptible raising of the confidence of the people in the power and possibilities of Methodism in Ireland. What seemed to be a vague dream and a daring venture became a splendid realisation and filled the people with humble gratitude and joyous readiness to embark upon the tasks that awaited them.

It was evident from an early stage of the movement that it would be necessary for some one without delay to devote his entire time to the varied work required in connection with the Fund. The Conference of 1899 yielded to the request that Mr. Lamont should be appointed to the office of General Secretary of the Fund. For nearly four years he gave himself unstintedly and unwearyingly to its furtherance. It would be difficult to estimate the value of Mr. Lamont's services. The Conference of 1902 placed on record its appreciation of those who had taken the lead in this great enterprise in the following Resolutions:—

(1) "The Conference desires, in view of the completion of the Twentieth Century Fund, to place upon record its high appreciation of the distinguished services lovingly rendered to our Church and age by the Rev. James D. Lamont, General Secretary of the Fund. It feels that the marvellous success of this historic effort is, under God, largely due to the ability, insight, enterprise and persistent enthusiasm of Mr. Lamont and to the lofty spiritual aims which he has kept before the people from the inception of the movement until now."

(2) "With great heartiness the Conference desires gratefully to express its deep indebtedness to Mr. Robert Booth, J.P., for the manner and spirit in which he has discharged his onerous duties as Acting Treasurer of the Twentieth Century Fund. His time, energy and large business experience have been cheerfully placed at the disposal of the Fund, and have contributed in no small measure to its success."

(3) "The thanks of the Conference are also presented to the Treasurers and Secretaries of the Fund and to Mr. Alexander M. Fullerton for his valuable services as Secretary of the Executive Committee."

The Conference of 1899 adopted the following allocation of the Fund:—

(1) To the Home Mission Fund, £15,000. Of this sum £5,000 was for distinctly aggressive work, including the extension of the General Mission, Special Evangelistic Agency, Colportage Work and Open Air Mission efforts; while £10,000 was devoted to the General Purposes of the Fund, such as the Purchase, Erection, Improvement of Ministers' Residences and the strengthening of the position of Methodism in the small towns and villages in every way.

(2) To the General Chapel Fund was allotted £25,000, which was intended to assist in securing eligible building sites; in the erection and enlargement of Methodist places of worship and Lecture Halls, and of buildings for carrying on work amongst Soldiers and Sailors, and also for the completion of buildings already begun. Of

the total sum, £10,000 went to Belfast to form a Chapel Extension Fund, while £8,000 went to Dublin for a similar purpose. These sums, together with further subscriptions which it was intended to secure, were to be administered by local Committees in these cities.

(3) The third object assisted was Education, to the extent of £3,500. Of this amount Day Schools absorbed £2,000, while £1,000 was devoted to the training of Theological Students and £500 was set aside for work amongst the young in connexion with Sunday Schools and Christian Endeavour Societies and Temperance Organisations.

(4) Orphanages and the work of the Orphan Society were allotted £3,500.

(5) The sum of £2,000 was granted to further the interests of Foreign Missions. It was subsequently decided that the income derived from this amount should be devoted to assist young ladies to prepare as doctors and teachers for work on the Mission Field.

(6) The Supernumerary Ministers' Fund was allocated £1,000, but an additional £1,500 was to be given if the Fund exceeded 52,000 guineas.

The successful completion of the scheme in 1904 resulted, (including £3,623 received as interest) in a grand total of £52,630. This triumphant conclusion filled the Church with hope and gratitude. It was made apparent that there were reserves which only waited a suitable challenge to bring them into the active employment of the manifold operations of the Connexion. A great impetus was given to church extension. Many schemes long delayed took shape and, soon, as a result of the encouragement given by this Fund, numerous new Churches, Lecture Halls, Ministers' Residences and Day Schools were erected in different parts of the country. Much-needed assistance was given to colportage and open air efforts. As it had been determined that no part of the Fund should be employed to liquidate debts, very practical help was given to every form of aggressive enterprise. The political events and important events of following years could not have been foreseen or the expenditure in some areas would have been modified. The radical changes in education brought

about in Northern Ireland have rendered part of the outlay on school buildings less urgent from a denominational point of view, while movements in the population due to political events and the Great War have reduced the necessity for expenditure on new Churches in several localities.

An interesting feature of the scheme was that the names of subscribers and others on whose behalf a guinea was paid should be gathered into a great Historic Roll as an enduring memorial of the zeal and generosity of the Church as it faced the demands of the Twentieth Century.

CRAIGMORE HOME.

Amongst the gifts to the Fund was the Craigmore Home and Farm, situated near Aghalee, Lurgan, the property of Mr. T. F. Shillington, J.P. This generous offering was accepted for a Boys' Home and supplied a want long felt, especially in the North of Ireland. From the amount granted towards Orphanages, £2,000 was allocated for the equipment of the Home. About thirty boys are maintained, trained and educated in connection with this institution. A suitable elementary school, a minister's residence and a land-steward's dwelling house have been erected, forming with the ancestral home of the Shillington family a complete and worthy group of buildings well adapted for doing a much-needed and beneficent work. Many young folk have gone forth from the Home well equipped to pursue honourable and useful careers.

The Orphan School for Girls in Dublin has also been improved and enlarged. This old-established institution has developed along lines suitable for the new century. Both it and the Craigmore Home have been linked up with the Orphan Society, which together with these Homes is doing a large amount of preventive and rescue work in the interests of friendless and helpless boys and girls.

THE NEW CONNEXION CHURCH.

Soon after Wesley's death there were stirrings in the religious, social and political life of the country tending

towards the larger liberty of the people in every realm of life. The reaction of the French Revolution was evident. The outcome in British Methodism was the establishment of the Methodist New Connexion, led by the Rev. Alexander Kilham. A number of people in the district around Lisburn shared in views and ideals similar to those across the Channel. They were dissatisfied with the existing restrictions in regard to the ordinances of religion and lay representation in the courts of the Church. After some correspondence, these people, who had been expelled from the Methodist Societies in Ireland, united with their brethren in England of the New Connexion. The Rev. John McClure was their leader. A number of stations were established in and around Belfast. These congregations formed the nucleus of the New Connexion Mission Work in Ireland which was officially organised in 1825.

When the objects for which these dissentients had contended had been granted by the Irish Conference in later years, it was recognised that the ground for their existence as a separate branch of Methodism was largely removed. Negotiations were completed in 1904 by which the Mission Work and property of the Methodist New Connexion in Ireland were transferred to the Conference. An agreed sum of £4,000 was to be paid during a period of eight years for the property with any liabilities attaching thereto. By this arrangement Church members, Class Leaders, Local Preachers in the Methodist New Connexion were to be recognised as occupying their existing positions in the Methodist Church. The Conference pledged itself to maintain the pastoral and evangelistic work over the area occupied by the Methodist New Connexion, while the advantages of the Day School Department and the Orphan Institutions of the Methodist Church were to be extended on equal terms to the members of the New Connexion Societies. The legal requirements were after considerable delay completed, and thus was brought to an end a separation which time had to some extent justified, but had now rendered unnecessary and wasteful.

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH.

The English Primitive Methodist Church had for a number of years carried on Mission Work in Belfast, Portadown and other centres, but in the end their operations were confined to Belfast. The Primitive Methodist Church decided to withdraw from Ireland, and negotiations were set on foot for the transfer of their work and property to the Irish Conference. In 1910 an arrangement was reached by which the Primitive Methodist churches in Shankill Road and Donegall Road, Belfast, were transferred to the Agnes Street and Sandy Row Circuits, respectively, on payment of £2,000 and on condition that work be carried on in them for a period of years.

By these transfers of work and property from the Methodist New Connexion and the Primitive Methodist Church, Methodism in Ireland has been exclusively carried on by the Irish Methodist Conference and now presents an absolutely united front. The freedom and variety in methods of work and policy represented by these branches of English Methodism have been for many years a cherished possession of the churches under the jurisdiction of the Irish Conference, so that on grounds of economy, brotherhood and unity their withdrawal became advisable and was happily consummated.

THE MISSION GRANTS.

From the year 1826 the English Home Mission Committee made annual grants towards aggressive missionary effort in Ireland. These varying amounts were administered in connection with the Home Mission Committee of the Irish Conference. In the year 1903, however, it was decided by the English Home Mission Committee to substitute a capital sum in lieu of the annual grant. The amount agreed upon was £15,000, which was placed immediately under the control of the Irish Conference. The interest derived from this invested capital reduced the annual income from this source from £800 to £600. The Conference tendered its cordial thanks to the English Home Mission Committee for its

generous support through many years and assured the Committee that this mark of confidence would call forth renewed zeal in the evangelisation of Ireland. A contingent and variable grant was thus replaced in favour of a fixed sum, much to the advantage of both parties to the agreement.

An adjustment of still greater importance soon after occurred in the relations of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Committee to Ireland. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century Mission Stations and Mission Day Schools had been established in Ireland by the Foreign Missionary Society as part of its direct Missionary Work. The operations of the Society in Ireland were superintended by a minister appointed directly by it. The work was financed and controlled apart from the Irish Conference, although the missionaries were ministers in connection with the Irish Conference and amenable to its discipline. The system had many drawbacks, so that a different arrangement was adopted by which an annual grant in aid of this work was given to the Home Mission Committee in Ireland and administered by it. The English Superintendent was withdrawn. The work carried on gradually became identical with that carried on by the Conference, although Circuits which had been formerly administered from the Mission House were still technically called Mission Stations. There was no actual difference, however, from the ordinary Circuit receiving a grant in aid. The annual grant from the Mission House varied in amount and was apportioned between the Home Mission Fund, the Chapel and Building Fund and the General Education Fund.

At the beginning of this century the Missionary Society determined to develop its work amongst the teeming millions of India and China. A new Mission Field was opened in Burmah. There was a demand that the resources of the Society should be used in work amongst those who knew nothing of any form of Christianity rather than amongst populations which were Roman Catholic, whether on the Continent of Europe or in Ireland. It was considered that whilst work already established amongst Roman Catholics should be maintained, yet the main efforts of the Society should be made amongst heathen people.

The result of this development of thought and interest was that the Wesleyan Missionary Society gave notice in 1903 that arrangements should be made whereby the Irish Conference should undertake the full support of all its own work in Ireland and, provided this was done, the Missionary Committee would make decreasing grants to the Irish Conference for a limited term of years, whilst support of the work hitherto aided by the Missionary Society in Ireland was being developed. It was also proposed to withdraw the Foreign Missionaries from deputation work in Ireland and to make the grant in aid dependent upon the amount contributed by Ireland towards Foreign Missions, but in no case would this grant exceed the contribution made.

After protracted and anxious negotiations, an arrangement was reached by which the grant from the Missionary Society was fixed at £4,200 per annum as from 1st January, 1906, to continue for ten years, when at the end of this period the grant should entirely cease. By this scheme provision was made not only for the maintenance of the work in Ireland during these ten years, but also for its continued maintenance when the grant should have ceased. The appeals for Foreign Missionary Work in Ireland were to be continued as heretofore. The Missionary Society maintained the right, if there should be any serious falling off in income from Ireland during the working out of the scheme, to reconsider the arrangement. Happily no need arose for this reconsideration, as the Foreign Missionary income from Ireland steadily increased until it was practically doubled. The challenge to the people for work abroad arising out of the readjustment of the grant from the Missionary Committee was splendidly met by the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of the Church. The knowledge that every pound raised would be spent in distant lands also stimulated the support of the Foreign Missionary Funds.

Reorganisation in agency and finance was undertaken by which, without serious reduction in area or efficiency, the work was maintained and provision also made for carrying on the work when all aid had ceased. This was secured by a Revision of Agency, Reduction in Home Mission Grants,

Relief in the Payment of Glebe Loans and a Curtailment of Contingent Expenses. By these means a sum of £1,500 per year was saved, and a surplus income was secured during the ten years in which the grant was received, which constituted a Reserve Fund from which a contribution to revenue was available when the grant finally ceased.

The settlement of this difficult question brought fresh burdens on the people, who were slow to allow any retrenchment in the work to take place, but these were borne in a most heroic and self-sacrificing spirit, sustained by the knowledge that our diminished resources set free corresponding sums for the furtherance of the work of the Foreign Missionary Society amongst the heathen. The promise that there should be no lessening of Missionary zeal and support has been more than fulfilled.

Part of the arrangement made was that the Centenary grant for Schools in Ireland, amounting to £6,000, should be handed over to the Trustees for Donations and Bequests subject to a declaration of the Trusts on which the money should be held. The Missionary Society was thereby relieved of the payment of interest at a fixed rate which was at the time in excess of the current rates for money.

By these financial readjustments Irish Methodism has become more self-contained, its resources are subject to less fluctuation, its spirit of independence and initiative increased, and its power to embark on fresh enterprises greatly strengthened. In all the negotiations carried on, as well as in the final settlements, the consideration, care and generosity of the brethren in England were strikingly displayed. Links, other than financial, were forged that have led to more close and loving interest in each other's work, while the claims of the Kingdom of God in Ireland and abroad have been more fully met.

LAYMEN'S DEPENDENT CIRCUITS' FUND.

During the progress of the Great War from 1914 till 1918 the cost of living rapidly increased, so that it was felt by many in the Church that the scale of allowances to ministers was entirely inadequate to meet the situation.

Unofficial efforts to assist the ministers on the dependent Circuits were made largely through the leadership and efforts of the late Mr. P. B. Robinson, of Dublin, which resulted in a war bonus being given to them. It was recognised, however, by many generous laymen that a more systematic and permanent effort should be made to give relief in the altered relations caused by the Great War. A Laymen's Dependent Circuits' Fund was therefore established with the fullest sympathy and support of the Conference, but the efforts and results were left entirely in the hands of two executive committees; one for the Northern Synods of Belfast and Portadown and the other for Dublin and the remaining seven Synods in Ireland. Mr. Samuel Kelly (afterwards Sir Samuel Kelly, C.B.E.) was Chairman and Mr. S. T. Mercier, J.P., Treasurer of the former, while Mr. Richard W. Booth, J.P., was Chairman and Mr. Philip B. Robinson, J.P., was Treasurer of the latter Committee. By quiet, steady, earnest effort for three years the Fund grew until in 1921 it was completed with a total of £33,829. This noble sum was invested and grants in aid made to every dependent circuit as supplementary to the ordinary grants given by the Home Mission Fund.

The administration of this Fund remained in the hands of the two Executives, but was subsequently carried on by the Home Mission Committee. The Fund, however, remains a separate source of income from the ordinary investments of the Home Mission Fund and will so continue as a standing monument of the generous efforts of a band of noble laymen to meet the urgent necessities of a difficult period. In addition to this special appeal, so heartily responded to in every part of the Connexion, the Home Mission Fund succeeded in raising its income so as to give larger sums in regular grants towards increased stipends. The Conference of 1921 placed on record its opinion that the stipends of all ministers should be increased by at least 100 per cent. over pre-war amounts to meet the increased cost of living. It was resolved that the minimum sum to be aimed at was £250 per annum for a minister receiving a married minister's appointment and no unmarried minister to receive less than £150. These minima have been very generally reached.

Concurrently with the very successful efforts of the Laymen's Executives for dependent circuits, it was felt that something should be done to advance the stipends on non-dependent circuits. The late Mr. George Hadden, J.P., of Wexford, and Mr. W. J. Marshall, J.P., Belfast, with the co-operation of other generous laymen, carried through this scheme by which a general increase in stipends was secured.

APPEAL TO FRIENDS OF IRELAND IN OTHER LANDS.

In 1911 the Rev. R. C. Phillips was set apart to visit the United States of America and Canada, in order to enlist the practical financial support of the sons and daughters of Ireland who had settled in these countries. The proceeds were to be devoted to the relief and extension of the work of God, particularly in rural areas. Colportage Agency, Open Air Preaching, Tent Missions and Evangelistic efforts shared in the financial results, while circuits which had contracted heavy responsibilities for Church extension were assisted. For two years Mr. and Mrs. Phillips laboured with great devotion and self-denial, securing the interest of many friends who made contributions annually for many succeeding years to the Special Evangelistic activities of the Church.

BELFAST ADDITIONAL AGENCY FUND.

In 1907 the Conference was deeply impressed by the continuous growth of the city of Belfast not only through the natural increase of the population, but also through the rapid influx of people, including members of the Methodist Church, from other parts of Ireland, and it realised that the opportunities and responsibilities of the Methodist Church had not been fully met. It therefore appointed a Committee to inquire into the whole situation and devise means by which more adequate work could be done. It was decided that a fund should be created called the Belfast Additional Agency Fund from which grants should be made to provide additional agents, other than ministers, who should act in conjunction with the ministers and officials of the circuits desirous of employing them.

This Fund received £500 which had been originally allocated from the Twentieth Century Fund for the employment of a Young People's Missionary, but which had not been appropriated for that object. From the amount of the Twentieth Century Fund allotted for Evangelistic work £250 was granted, while £75 was appropriated annually from the Twentieth Century Fund and a sum of £125 was to be raised by annual subscriptions. From the annual income of the Fund grants have been made towards the maintenance of Deaconesses, Evangelists, Supernumerary Ministers, on the condition that additional work was undertaken. By this Fund a great stimulus has been given to aggressive enterprise and an effort made, limited only by the resources of the Fund, to keep pace with the clamant needs of the city.

In 1917 this Fund was helped by an annual grant of £200 from the John White Fund. Mr. John White, who had died a short time previously in America, left the residue of his estate, amounting to £6,536, to be invested and the interest to be used for Missionary Revival work in Ulster. Mr. White had emigrated in the previous century from the Charlemont Circuit to the United States, where he had been very successful in business. The requirements of his bequest were met by setting apart £20 annually for the benefit of the Charlemont Circuit, £200 to the Belfast Additional Agency Committee, and the balance for such Missionary Revival work as the Conference might determine from year to year. From this bequest many rural districts have received valuable assistance.

BOARD OF STATUTORY TRUSTEES.

The Board of Trustees for donations and bequests which held under Conference direction certain donations and bequests intended for circuit and connexional purposes, found on investigation that it could be placed in a stronger and more satisfactory position with regard to the funds under its control if it availed itself of the advantages conferred by certain Acts of Parliament, and so Conference directed that the necessary Act of Parliament should be obtained. In 1915, therefore, an Act was passed, known as "The

Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915," which constituted and incorporated the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland and vested in them certain trust properties and provided for the administration of these properties and for certain other purposes connected therewith. The Act vested in the Trustees the properties of the Trustees for Donations and Bequests; the Trustees of the Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund; the Trustees of the Methodist Ministers' Sons' Fund, and the Statutory Trustees of the former Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society. By Sectional Committees of the Trustees the different interests are dealt with in so far as the powers of the entire body of Trustees can be delegated to them. This Act has proved of incalculable advantage to the Connexion. Its value as a legal body of holding and continuing Trustees has been demonstrated again and again.

NEW LEGISLATION.

As a living Church led by the Spirit of God Irish Methodism has had to legislate for the growing requirements of the people. By patient consideration and wise toleration changes have been introduced to the great advantage of the work of the Church. One of the most important changes related to the conditions of Church membership, which was settled in 1908. In Great Britain the same subject occupied the attention of the Conference for several years. Both Conferences moved concurrently in the matter so that the basis of membership should be practically identical. It was felt the time had come legally to recognise those persons who for various reasons did not avail themselves of the form of Christian Fellowship afforded by the Class Meeting. If satisfying the conditions of membership in other particulars, it was decided that such persons should be placed "under the pastoral care of a suitable leader, whose duty it shall be to visit them from time to time and to watch over them in the Lord. Such persons, so long as they walk as becometh the Gospel of Christ, shall receive a quarterly ticket and shall as members of our Church be entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership."

In the same year, representation of Church members in Circuit Quarterly and Leaders' Meetings was granted. At an aggregate Church meeting of any Society annually held provision is made whereby one representative for every fifty or fraction of fifty members of Society shall be elected, after nomination, by ballot, to the Leaders' Meeting of that Society and thereby to membership in the Circuit Quarterly Meeting.

In 1910 the Conference resolved to remove all restrictions preventing the election of women as members of the Conference, forming as they do so large and efficient a proportion of our Class Leaders, so important a section in all our Church life and activities and, as a result of recent legislation, so substantial an addition to the strength of the Leaders' and Quarterly Meetings on many Circuits.

THE FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Following the political unrest and troubles which resulted in the establishment of Parliaments for Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State, a large number of our people settled in Belfast and in the country around. These added to the difficulties already felt in providing adequate church accommodation. Out of this urgent necessity to meet pressing needs sprang the Methodist Forward Movement. To conserve the fruits of the great religious awakening in progress, to extend evangelistic enterprise and to provide a church home for thousands who thronged our sanctuaries, was the problem that urgently called for solution.

The Twentieth Century Fund had given a great stimulus to church extension in the early years of the century and a number of new erections took place, but on some of these burdensome debts still remained. Gradually these were being wiped out, but there was no readiness to embark on fresh building responsibilities. Afterwards the Great War occurred, absorbing the energies and resources of the people, so that when the imperative demand arose for additional church accommodation no organised effort existed to meet it. The rapid growth of the population of Belfast increased the difficulties of the situation and demanded a big forward effort

if Methodism was to fulfil its mission and discharge its responsibilities to the community. Circuits shrank from the formidable task of erecting new churches on account of the greatly increased cost of building. The War had trebled the outlay on all kinds of new buildings by the increased payments for labour and materials.

The need for a new church on Donegall Road, Belfast, was urgent. The existing iron structure was unworthy and utterly inadequate, and the same applied to the iron church on Castlereagh Road, Belfast. A suggestion was made by the Rev. Robert Byers in the Chapel Sub-Committee of April, 1923, that as no one circuit was equal to the task of building these much-needed churches, a united committee should be formed to guide developments in evangelism and church erection. At a complimentary banquet subsequently given to Sir Samuel Kelly, C.B.E., he advocated the establishment of a central committee to prevent competing claims and to bring all contemplated schemes within the control and support of a central committee. This proposal was brought before the May Synod by a strong deputation of laymen and ministers and heartily endorsed by it. The Conference appointed a representative committee, with Rev. G. A. McIlwrath as Convener, in 1923 "for the development of aggressive evangelistic work in Northern Ireland and approved of the proposal to raise £100,000 for this purpose."

In the following spring Revs. G. A. McIlwrath, Robert Byers and Dr. Northridge visited Canada and the United States in the interests of the scheme, and met with encouraging support. It was found necessary, however, that some minister should devote his whole time to this work, and subsequently Rev. Dr. Northridge was set apart and spent the greater part of the following year, 1924/25, organising the appeal in the United States and Canada. At the General Conference of the M. E. Church held in May, 1924, Rev. Dr. Northridge was enabled to bring, with much success and encouragement, the needs of Ireland before the Conference, which subsequently gave its unanimous endorsement to any appeal that might be made in the interests of an Irish-American Memorial Building in Belfast. The friends in

America desired to raise a suitable memorial to Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, the Founders of Methodism in America, as well as to many others of Irish lineage who had enriched the churches in America.

To prosecute the work begun in America it was considered advisable that a deputation should be sent, and therefore Revs. F. E. Harte, M.A., W. H. Smyth, M.A., and Dr. Northridge were sent out in the autumn of 1925. They held conferences, addressed meetings and sought to gain practical support to carry out the wishes of the American friends who supported a Central Irish Memorial Building in Belfast. The Forward Movement Committee had decided in conjunction with the Trustees of Donegall Square Church that the Memorial Buildings should be raised in connection with the historic mother church of Belfast. An urgent need of the church was suitable provision for carrying on its many-sided work amongst young people. Consequently there has been erected a beautiful hall, together with several shops, in Upper Arthur Street, while the old basement schoolroom has been remodelled and beautified, the whole forming an admirable suite of rooms well adapted for the work of a central modern church.

Meanwhile the appeal of the people in the North of Ireland was meeting with much success. Several large sums were promised not only by individuals but by Circuits in Belfast. To develop the Fund and carry out its intentions, the Conference of 1926 released Rev. W. H. Smyth, M.A., from circuit work. The scheme was launched to cover a period of five years from November, 1923. One of the conditions of receiving grants was that no debt should remain on any of the new buildings. In previous efforts at Church extension, churches were built with such an incumbrance of debt that the struggle to exist became so crippling that aggressive spiritual work was greatly hindered. It was determined that in this effort these hampering results should have no place. Another condition was that every centre assisted should make a substantial and equitable contribution which, together with the grant in aid, should liquidate the cost of the entire scheme. Thus two new churches, Donegall

Road and Cregagh Road, were launched upon a career of unfettered usefulness. The success of these churches has been phenomenal. Situated as they are in rapidly-growing districts, they meet a much-felt want and bring to fruition the seed of many years of faithful sowing. A grant of £8,000 was made to each building.

For many years it was felt that Grosvenor Hall, the headquarters of the operations of the Belfast Central Mission, with its manifold and multiplying schemes for social and philanthropic work, would need to be replaced by a more stable building if progress was to continue and if the Hall was to fulfil its functions. The iron hall occupied a splendid central site, and had served its purpose admirably, but its day of service was nearly at an end. It was imperative that some effort to replace it should be made. The Forward Movement made a grant of £20,000 towards an outlay of £54,000. Aided by a splendid donation of £15,000 from Mr. Joseph Rank, of London, together with donations to the Ker Memorial Fund and many other special contributions, this large grant enabled the new Hall to be opened practically free of debt. It owes much to the skill and generosity of Mr. Hugh Turtle of the firm of Messrs. McLaughlin & Harvey, Builders, who superintended its erection with wise and loving interest. The main Hall has a frontage on Grosvenor Hall of four shops, while the Ker Memorial Minor Hall is entered immediately from Glengall Street at the rear.

Another section of the enterprise was to aid in the extension and equipment of the Edgehill Theological Hall, which had been secured for the training of candidates for the ministry. A grant of £2,500 was made from the Fund, while the balance of the outlay of £4,500 was raised by friends in the Free State and elsewhere. A very suitable residential building adapted to the requirements of twenty students is fully occupied and admirably fulfilling its purpose.

The Fund also made grants for the purchase of a new site for a church in the Stranmillis district and to Pitt Street New Mission Hall within Ballymacarrett area, where a remarkably successful mission had been maintained for many years. This new building meets the wants of a teeming

population, and is known as the Robert Thompson Memorial Hall in recognition of the warm and constant interest in the work by Mr. Robert Thompson.

The operations of the Fund have been largely confined to the North of Ireland, both in relation to income and expenditure. When the scheme was begun the terrible political troubles in the Free State made the extension of Methodist work a practical impossibility for years to come. The very existence of Methodism was seriously threatened, and hence the expenditure was of necessity confined to areas where there were urgent calls for assistance and development. It was also recognised that the many added burdens placed upon the loyal members of our Church in the Free State would prevent any expectation of help from them in developing work in the North, but they have borne their part in meeting the cost of Edgehill College Extension.

The generous support of many contributors to this Forward Movement, and especially the hearty co-operation of some circuits whose financial resources are limited, is worthy of special mention. Voluntary workers in the circuits and the constant support of a representative committee and executive greatly helped to bring the Fund to a successful conclusion. It owes much to the Treasurers, Sir Samuel Kelly and Major Graham Shillington, M.P., and to Mr. Richard W. Charlesson, who discharged the various responsibilities of Acting Treasurer with great financial skill and success. The resolution of the Conference regarding the General Secretary was as follows:—

“The Conference expresses deep gratitude to the Rev. William Henry Smyth, M.A., for the diligent, devoted and eminent services he has rendered as General Secretary of the Forward Movement in Ireland. Despite many and serious difficulties, Mr. Smyth has been untiring in his labours to consolidate and extend the work of our Church in Belfast, and the Conference rejoices in the conspicuous success which has crowned his efforts.”

The total sum raised by the Fund from all sources was £73,320, from which grants have been made towards an

expenditure of £115,000. This is the largest amount ever raised by any single effort in Irish Methodism, but it does not discharge all the obligations of the Church towards the great and growing needs of the city of Belfast, in which about three-sevenths of the Methodist population of Ireland are found. A sustained and continuous Forward Movement is called for if the coming years are to witness efforts adequate to the challenge presented.

THE ACTS OF PARLIAMENT OF 1928.

The question of the union in England of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church had occupied the earnest attention of these Churches for some years, and it was recognised that when that union was consummated it would have a profound effect upon the existing relations between the Irish and British Conferences. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to take steps to secure the continued statutory existence of the Irish Conference with undiminished powers and to give legal protection to the existing Trust property of the Church in Ireland.

By a Deed Poll enrolled in Chancery in 1784, Mr. Wesley gave legal status to the Conference and constituted the Conference as consisting of one hundred ministers, henceforth known as the Yearly Conference or the Legal Hundred. By this Deed Poll the admission and expulsion of ministers and the appointment of ministers to the use and enjoyment of Trust property were under the control of this Yearly Conference, but in the case of ministers stationed in Ireland, the powers of the Legal Hundred were to be exercised by a delegate or delegates appointed by the Legal Conference. The Acts of such delegate being reported to the Legal Conference became the acts of that Conference. It was evident that any union in England which modified or set aside the Deed Poll would leave the Irish Conference and the Trust property in connection therewith without legal protection.

The political changes which culminated in the establishment of the Irish Free State with its Parliament and the

Parliament of Northern Ireland precluded any Act of the Imperial Parliament enabling the Methodist Union to take place in England having validity in Ireland. It was therefore found necessary to provide identical Bills in the Parliaments of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland for the purpose of conferring powers upon the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland hitherto vested in the Yearly Conference. Unanimous sanction to this course was given by the Legal Conference and by the Irish Conference. The Bills became law in 1928, and were notable as the first Acts of an identical character to pass concurrently in the two Parliaments of Ireland.

Advantage was taken of the passing of these Bills to incorporate therein certain amendments of the Methodist Church in Ireland Act of 1915 and to confer additional powers upon the Statutory Trustees appointed under this Act. By these Acts also Trustees of property held in Trust for the Church in Ireland were given powers by which they could adopt a model declaration of Trust as the Trusts upon which the property vested in them should thenceforth be held.

At the same time a new constitution was, after long and anxious consideration, also drawn up and lodged in the High Court of Justice of the Free State and in the High Court of Chancery of Northern Ireland, to which reference was made in the Acts of Parliament, but provision was made by which it might be altered or amended by Special Resolution as the Conference might think fit.

One of the most important changes sanctioned by these Acts was that of extending the term of ministerial appointment to any circuit from three years to five years, or such other period as may be fixed by the Constitution for the time being. The Church thus becomes master in its own house in a matter of such vital consequence to the interests of the Connexion, but adequate safeguards against hasty legislation are provided through the procedure that must be followed.

In the interval between the passing of these Acts in 1928 and the date of the consummation of the union in England, which is expected in 1932, the British Conference generously sanctioned the continuance of the Irish representation in the

Legal Conference, and provision is made in the scheme of Union by which ministers received into full connexion with the Irish Conference shall continue to be regarded as ministers in full connexion with the Conference of the Methodist Church in England. The President of the British Conference will be ex-officio President of the Irish Conference, while reciprocal representation in both Conferences will continue. By these means the intimate connexion of the two Conferences will be maintained and the threatened isolation of Irish Methodism which was feared will be avoided. Great generosity and kindness have marked the attitude of the British Conference towards the work of Methodism in Ireland, and in the delicate adjustments which have been happily completed the British Conference has shown its strong desire to keep in intimate fellowship with the Irish Conference and to help in the solution of difficulties which inevitably arose when the Legal Conference ceased to function.

All the Forward Movements that have been considered in necessarily brief fashion, whether in Church extension or in legislation, in philanthropy or evangelism, indicate that the life of the Church has been maintained and expressed in a power of adaptation, a growing organisation, an aggressive and self-governing spirit which give confidence in regard to the future. If its initial creative energies are conserved, then the witness of Methodism will be continued with undiminished clearness, vigour and success through the changes which the years are certain to unfold.

XI

IRISH METHODISM AND THE FUTURE

REV. ALEXANDER MCCREA, M.A.

It requires some temerity to write about the future. History we can reflect upon and even the living present can be felt and partly interpreted, but the future demands insight and foresight to which we cannot lay claim. Yet one of the aims of this volume is to derive certain conclusions about the future of Irish Methodism from a study of its past. If we cannot follow the direction in which its currents flow with any great certainty, it is at least not impious to cast our eyes forward as far as the curve of the stream will permit.

Four questions challenge us as we look forward: Reunion of the Churches; the Type and Training of our Ministers; the Age-Spirit in which the Church must work, and Public Worship. These questions to some extent inevitably overlap.

REUNION OF THE CHURCHES

The first question that arises is: Has Methodism in Ireland a future? Among Methodists this question is received with ill-disguised impatience. Her birth, almost two hundred years ago, was attended by so many divine favours and in circumstances almost miraculous, her sense of vocation is so strong, her spirit is so youthful and missionary, her ecclesiastical polity is so free from the trammels of creeds and canon laws, her constitution is so free to accommodate itself to each new situation, her emphasis on the experience of God in the soul and as the seat of authority is so strong, her adventurous faith arising out of this to meet all scholarship and all knowledge, her repudiation of any fiat from individual or even council that conflicts with the collective experience of the whole Church of God, her sense of vocation to universal evangelism and social reform—all make Methodists hesitant concerning any alliance that might cool her ardour or cripple her activities.

Let us seek more fully to interpret the attitude of Methodism to reunion, reserving the right to criticise it later. Within the Church as a whole there is no awakened conscience on the question. A few prophetic voices are heard calling her to prepare the way of the Lord, but it is much to be doubted if any resolution on the matter beyond a pious aspiration, would be carried in Conference. The reasons that would be given for inaction and independence, we believe, are these: (1) That being a small body in Ireland it is not the part of Methodism to initiate steps that would lead to union. If such steps were taken, the obvious answer of the larger Church or Churches approached would be—"Yes, if you are tired of a separate existence we shall make room for you, but it must be by way of submission and absorption." (2) While Methodism recognises the great ministries of the sister Churches, springing out of a different spiritual ancestry, yet she believes that in her witness to certain doctrines, such as Regeneration, the Assurance of Divine Forgiveness and Perfect Love in the Soul, she has a work to do for God, that can only be submerged or forgone at the peril of the divine displeasure and in the spiritual impoverishment of the whole Church. (3) Methodism has a peculiar ideal for its ministry that is not always understood and that she is reluctant to surrender. In maintaining this ideal she judges no man in other ministries, but she asks that her ideal be understood. Her ministry is, and always has been, a preaching or prophetic ministry. Her places of worship were once called "preaching houses." She felt called to mediate life in Christ's name by preaching. Men are born of God through the living word. The priestly office is only recognised in her ministers as it is in all believers; they are priests when they intercede publicly or privately on behalf of the people, but they always recognise themselves as prophets.

To be a prophet a man must not merely know about God, he must know Him. This means that whether the experience came about gently and even unconsciously or sprang up violently, the preacher must have had a moment of surrender to the claims of God, entered into new life, received an assurance that satisfied his own heart by its peace

and power and that satisfied the Church by the fruits of godly living. Usually this total experience is called conversion, but it implies holy dealings between the soul and God that result in a great passion to tell to others what has happened and to commend Christ as the way to abundant life.

Whether Methodism fails in reaching her standard or not, she makes this immediate knowledge of God her first condition of admission to her ministry. She uses every means that experience has taught her to sift and test candidates for the ministry to see if they have this experimental knowledge. Again and again she has rejected men with academic and other attractive accomplishments, yet who seemed lacking in things of the Spirit, because she felt that in the Christian ministry something more fundamental must come first. She is unmoved from this attitude to-day and her members feel that any conditions of union must guard this cherished ideal. (4) While Methodism recognises the value of teaching ministries and is aware that all ministries will probably have to embody more instruction and less exhortation in their message in the future, yet she looks for and insists upon a more demonic quality in the preacher than in the teacher. While the teacher *may* appeal to conscience, emotion and will, the preacher *must* do so. It is not his merely to repeat information or communicate ideas, but to move men, to entreat them to be reconciled to God. This moving preaching cannot be got apart from commanding personalities, men of a certain magnetic quality which is given and not taught. It is an immense asset in the teacher, but it is the essential and paramount quality in the preacher. (5) Since the days of John Wesley Methodism has had to fight for a principle which is of the essence of her divine vocation and yet for which she is disliked more than for almost anything else. That principle is that she ought to carry her message into any area in which it is not proclaimed and in which it is obviously needed. Those who do not see her point of view write this down as cant and hypocrisy. Methodists believe it is neither one nor the other. Parochialism was one of Wesley's greatest hindrances; the parish was the unit of eighteenth century thought and the parish boundary was too

often the boundary of prayer and service. The bishops pinned their clergy within the parish area, and to cross one's parish frontier, no matter what the conditions on the further side, was not only to violate good taste and canon law, but to insult the shepherd on the other side. Wesley tried to work through the bishops and the several clergy, in a few instances with success, but when he met men like Bishop Gibson of London, who inhibited him and forbade churches for his message, Wesley then felt that England was more important than canon law, and that neglected souls had a claim on his message whether they lived inside or outside the parish boundary. He saw men's needs and cried out in two sentences, one Scriptural and the other of his own minting—"whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," and "I look on all the world as my parish." No historian is found to-day who will say that England would have been better off if Wesley had kept within his own parish, but every historian hastens to say that Wesley's audacity was laden with blessing not only to England, but to all mankind. Need it be wondered at that modern Methodists are jealous of a principle that led to such gracious and beneficent results, and are chary of a reunion in which the sacrifice of this principle might be involved? The difference between evangelism and proselytism is this: The evangelist has a tender heart, he sees souls in distress, and the love of Christ, as well as the dictates of humanity, constrains him to offer them such as he has, redemption through the blood of Christ and power through faith in His name. The proselytiser has neither the vision of souls in need nor of God. He sees only what is near—his own denomination, and like men of old, when he compasses sea and land to make a proselyte, he makes him two-fold more a child of hell than himself. Divine love and tender pity being absent from such "conversions," only a community marked by uncharitableness can arise. We cannot certify for all Methodists as to which class they belong, but we unhesitatingly affirm that as a Church Methodism prays that, whether by her life or by death she extends the Kingdom

of God, her first prayer is "Thy Kingdom come." If proposals for union should ever reach her, one condition of acceptance will be the right in the new united Church to "go not only to those who need [her message] but to those who need it most." (6) Methodists believe there is only one Church: it is composed of all believers in Jesus Christ who draw their life from Him. These believers are found in every branch of Christendom, in Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations alike. Only God sees where all these members of the true Church are. These "living stones" constitute the true Church. It is, being living, an organic Church. It already possesses the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Its members are already one in the sense of the great text so often misquoted: "As Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." The union of the Father in the Son is nothing visible whatever, "for no man hath seen God at any time." It is a union of love, purpose, trust and gladness. Herein Methodists seek (they often fail) to live in a spirit of love to all men. They try to think and let think, they unchurch no one, they spread the Table of the Lord and invite all men, saints and penitent sinners, to the feast and to the fellowship. They deny the validity of no ministry that bears the fruit of the Spirit. "They are the friends of all and the enemies of none" in the Church or out of it. And because of this Methodists believe with all their hearts that they are a genuinely Catholic Church, and each member is apostolic and catholic in his belief. Their pulpits are open to all men who preach Christ and Him crucified as the way, the truth, and the life. If others deny Methodists a place in the true Church, they will not retaliate and unchurch them. If others deny the validity of Methodist orders, be it so, God has used Methodism and that is her credential. On the other hand, Methodists cannot conceal from themselves that, what is often held up to them as the one, only and true Church, is for all its outer semblance of unity under an earthly and visible head rent and torn by dissensions of the spirit, and that visible unity avails little if invisible unity—the unity of the spirit—is lacking. It is the spirit that

quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing except to lead to glory in temporal power and earthly pomp and circumstance. Methodism is the largest Protestant Church in the world to-day. This fact just constitutes one of her greatest perils. We hear the fact stated perhaps too often, and we hope that the placarding of Methodist statistics may give place to a closer enquiry as to whether Methodism is fit to be used freely of God in bringing in His Kingdom. The greatness of a Church lies not in its numerical strength, but in its kinship with the mind and spirit of Christ.

THE NEED FOR FEDERATION

Having stated what we believe to be the conviction of the majority of Irish Methodists about reunion, we now ask: Is this the end of the matter? Is the voice of the people always the voice of God? May there not be need for denominational repentance as well as personal or international repentance? If it should appear that closer co-operation is essential to the coming of the Kingdom both in Ireland and on the Mission Field, can Methodists ignore or evade it? We use the word co-operation because the word reunion is enshrouded in so much mist that at present it has little significance.

Whatever about conditions in Ireland, signs are not wanting that a divided Protestantism will soon become intolerable on the Mission Field. In Asia and Africa the indigenous churches are passing out of the uncritical stage of infancy and realising their own powers of thought and action. This temper is aggravated by a like development in politics. The Christian Church in China has shown us what may soon be expected in all Mission Fields. "Missionaries from the West are wanted to help the Church to keep pace with the growth of the nation along educational and economic lines, specially men trained in agriculture and sociology; there is also a great desire for Christian leaders from the West to visit and lecture on the Christian message"; but all missionaries and visitors must come as guests and agents of the Chinese Church and not as patrons or proprietors. This sense of national vigour and of ecclesiastical autonomy

compels every Christian Chinese to think about the history and character of his Church from the very beginning. He has no wish to reproduce in the National Church of China the divisions and strifes of Methodism, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism or Lutheranism. These are portrayed daily before his eyes in the various denominations. He cannot see and feel as we do that the bitterness is mostly past and gone. "If so," he asks, "why do you not unite and show by your actions that it is gone?" If we do not move towards reunion he will, and the day is not far distant when missionaries who go out from us will find that their denomination, so precious at home, has been swallowed up in a new united National Church, that to become a missionary means to shed one's "ism." South India is travelling the same road, and if the reunion scheme should fail it will fail not because of Indian Christians, but because of the Western Churches. Should we have any sighs or tears over the disappearance of our denominationalism in the East if thereby the mind of Christ is more fully expressed and the will of God is being done?

A second fact that coming Methodism must reckon on will be the changed personnel of our Conference. It is a matter of joy that both in numbers and in equipment our Church is sending out increasing forces to the Mission Field.* For various reasons, health, education of their children, etc., these missionaries will return to circuits in the homeland. No man can live in the atmosphere of the new united National Churches abroad without carrying back something of the same outlook into the deliberations at home. Ireland is an island and in spite of ourselves we do tend to become insular. The greater part of Methodism is in one province. Can we escape being provincial? Returned missionaries are already providing us the antidote. But even among men at home a new leaven is at work. The influences of the Student Christian Movement, especially in its Quadrennial Conferences; of the Student Volunteer Movement bringing outgoing missionaries into touch with men for the home ministry; of the friendly relationships between the Methodist students and those of other theological colleges, all are making for a

*See Chapter III.

truer perspective, a deeper appreciation of the greatness of other ministries, and a sense of common fellowship in Christ Jesus our Lord. If the students of to-day will but carry this broader vision forward into the days when they will be legislators in our Church courts, and there is every reason to believe that they will, then difficulties in the way of reunion that seem to us insurmountable will pass away. It will be easier to get the ear of the Conference on reunion twenty years hence than it is to-day. The forces that will produce the change are already at work.

THE MENACE OF SECULARISM

A third consideration that will influence the Methodism of the future is the age-spirit around us. It is easy to be frightened by a word and to over-emphasise a tendency, yet all Christian people must recognise a new attitude to life and the universe in the movement called Secularism. It can hardly be called a creed, much less a cult; it is an attitude to ultimate questions that is largely agnostic, and, with a few, it is definitely atheistic. It seeks to interpret life and man's social obligations apart from religion. It omits God, it ignores all approach to the unseen in worship. It finds the springs of service and philanthropy in unaided human nature. It needs no divine revelation, worship or prayer. Its slogans are: "Be decent," "Play the game," "Cultivate your brains," "Help lame dogs when you meet them," and "Taste the sweets of this life." The name of J. G. Holyoake is given as the founder of Secularism, but thousands in all sorts of Christian denominations who probably never heard of Holyoake are faithful disciples. Many of them are such because they have never tried to think out life or its meaning; many of them have looked in vain to our pulpits for guidance and instruction on the A, B, C of Christianity; many of them find the way of the "natural man" so easy that they prefer to follow the drift of society and cut religion out. In our homes they disappoint us by a neglect of the Bible, prayer and worship. In public life, if they become schoolmasters or cabinet ministers, they try to abolish "parsons and religion" from the schools. The propagation of Christianity in foreign

countries is to them a misdirection of energy. The Secularists are in all the Churches partly the outcome of unchristianised teaching or shallow thinking. We might take this somewhat new type less seriously but for the fact that it is becoming widespread. Non-Christian countries that have shed off their former inadequate religions and have not heard or been able to accept the exacting claims of Jesus Christ are adopting a Secularist programme. China halts between Christ and Secularism. The latter blends readily with her own Confucian ethics. Turkey has rejected Islam only to fall back on animistic cults and Secularism, and the latter is winning. Russia, i.e., Communistic Russia, professes nothing nearer a religion than Secularism. At the present moment Mr. Gandhi, who has been a believer in the power of the unseen in earthly affairs, is in the perilous plight of being dragged by a party, who evidently stand for Secularism, over to their camp. Since the war, within the British Empire the sense of the reality of God has become distressingly feeble. It is not true to say that for most "the things that are not seen are Eternal," and with what consequences we know. We need not tarry to show that the same attitude to life is found everywhere. It is found in all denominations and among men of no denomination. It cuts across all groupings and civilizations, nationalities and traditions. It practically challenges God's right to rule society. It is the twentieth century Anti-Christ. What is its message to the Churches? That they must unite to meet its challenge, pool their intellectual resources to meet its negations, and show by deeds that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." The question of government by bishops or by presbyters is a small one compared with the question of the reality of God or the possibility of communion with Him. Secularism calls loudly to Methodism to take the long view and the broad view and to unite her resources in a common and universal struggle.

Two other questions arise when we think of Methodism and reunion: (1) Every opportunity must be seized to cultivate a closer acquaintance with workers for Christ in other denominations. What a recent writer said about world peace

is true of denominational peace. Resolutions, he said, passed by parliaments of the various nations and giving expression to sentiments of goodwill are almost wasted energy. It is the contact of living personalities that allays suspicion and creates a true understanding. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's visit to America and Mr. Kellogg's visit to London penetrated to the soul of the two peoples and made the atmosphere of war impossible. It is good to pay lip-service to brotherliness between the denominations, but individual ministers must study to show a generous spirit, to think the highest, and to co-operate where possible on their own circuits. (2) Happily starting points await us on social questions, and nowhere does the weakness of denominationalism show itself more clearly than here. The Church of Christ should be the deadly spear-head of the Kingdom. The Church as composed of believers in Christ should be the conscience of society. Its business is to set before statesmen the ideal of a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The statesmen must think out the means to this end. It is theirs to embody in laws the Spiritual Kingdom shown to them. All recent leaders, in Great Britain especially, have stated unequivocally that they look to the Church to give moral enthusiasm and resolution as well as ideals to the statesmen and that what the Church demands she will get. The urgent need of the hour in Ireland is a united demand by conference and close thinking of the various Churches for certain reforms that become a Christian society. The abuses are well known: Gambling, strong drink, unemployment, slums, diseased food, contaminated milk, underfed children, neglected cripples, sexual immorality, dangerous speeding in traffic, abuses in public education, and much else. Apart from a conscientious co-operation in which each denomination submerges itself for the sake of the higher end, these reforms will not be pressed. If we cannot envisage a united Protestant Church as at hand, Methodists can strive for a federation of Protestant Churches which will act as one living body on these matters and press its claims to the Statute Book. If we obey God in these possible matters, the impossible will yield before Him too.

MINISTERS AND THEIR TRAINING

The next question that will occupy the attention of future Methodism is the training of her ministers. During the past three decades a marked change has come over the mind of our Church on this question. No one to-day belittles education or thinks that conflict must exist between knowledge and godliness, between efficiency and goodness. The days of derision towards theological colleges are gone. Probably the character, ability and zeal of "college men" have done much to allay the groundless dread. To-day the current is flowing almost too rapidly in the opposite direction; the uncritical confidence of some in what can be done in College with any type of ministerial candidate is touching. The tendency to shift responsibility for the selection of candidates from the Quarterly Meetings to Synods, and from Synods to Conference, and from Conference to College is unhealthy. Every Methodist will need grace and courage to bear his own burden in recommending candidates. College is not intended to be a fine-meshed sieve for gathering out the unfit: At its lowest this method is too costly. A little more care in the early stage and a little less confidence in the powers of College would put matters right.

As we have already stated, there will be no deviation in future from the demand that the candidate shall possess a genuine experience of God in Christ that transforms and sustains his life. Only men who are sure that God breaks through the veil of sense and makes Himself known in their lives will be able to meet, with confidence, a baffled, distressed and hopeless world. Methodism will also pray for and require in her ministers the prophetic gift. Teachers, statesmen and scholars can be provided more effectively in other Churches, but we must never cease to provide effective preachers.

This brings us to the policy of ministerial training. Since secondary education is receiving increasing attention not only in the cities but in provincial areas, and since travelling facilities are everywhere so much increased, no excuse remains for a candidate offering himself uneducated, or even half educated, for the ministry. The hour has come

when each candidate may well be required to have passed the matriculation standard, and with the opportunities afforded it seems doubtful if a man is morally fit for the Christian ministry who would not strive to reach this level.

Next, given the necessary groundwork in the candidate, his further training should be conditioned by the end in view. The central truth in Christian doctrine is that God in Christ has come to redeem and save men, and that of this redeeming work there is a record in the New Testament. This implies two elements in the ministerial student: (a) Power to discern the eternal and spiritual treasure, and (b) power to detach it in thought and presentation from its original setting when preaching to-day. Another contributor to this volume* has shown that our message is not a creed, nor an ethic, nor reliance on external authority. It lies in the life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in the human soul. Our gospel is not in word but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. Life in the soul finds expression according to the thought and language of each particular age and country. The life-giving gospel must continually re-shape itself and adapt itself to the categories of thought that confront it. This means that the student must be familiar with the environment out of which it sprang. He must learn the language of Palestine, recapture the spirit of Jewish Apocalyptic thought, of Hellenism and of Rome. Languages and philosophy must find a place deep and firm in the theological curriculum. Only as these earthen vessels are seen to be distinct from the heavenly treasure and may yield place to newer and more effective vessels will the student become emancipated from that bondage to the letter that kills in creeds, languages and philosophies.

Since the experiences of a nation are to some extent the experiences of the individual writ large, a minister can best see the grace of God manifested in the history of the Christian Church. This is especially true to-day when Irish Methodism has turned her eyes with new eagerness to winning the world for Jesus Christ. Church history trains men to take the long and patient view. It helps them to avoid pitfalls in thought and practice. While a student may chafe in his study, as he

*See Chapter IV.

wrestles with gnostic heresies and persecutions of the Cathari, he soon learns that these "heresies" are alive and remain among the uninstructed to this hour. Church history is a method of teaching men by experience accumulated in the past. It acts as a tonic upon men who think that God has forgotten to be gracious and whose faith fails because of the temporary victory of evil.

If the student must know how the Kingdom of God fared among the nations in the past, he must also know with growing intimacy the soil in the individual life into which the seed of the Kingdom is cast. Psychology in its newer forms has come to stay. It has given us the clue to the cause of many lapses among converts in Evangelism. It has shown the need for a closer co-operation between the medical practitioner and the Christian minister. It has shown with fresh emphasis the relation between sin and disease. It has aided the teacher in the presentation of his message, especially to adults and adolescents. It has shown how pitfalls may be avoided that arise from perverted sex instincts. It has helped the young minister to understand the human machine that constitutes his body and much beside. Men may continue to do successful work without the help of psychology, but they will leave some needy souls unhelpt and many troublesome hearers misjudged.

Limitations of space prevent a detailed statement of all the other subjects that should appear on a theological curriculum. It will include a study of social problems, of ethics, of world religions that compete with Christ for the supremacy, of pastoral problems in rural areas and crowded cities, of the methods of sermon preparation and delivery, of voice cultivation, articulation, and, if the word is not too debased to be used, of rhetoric. Everything that makes for the effective arrest of men for Christ is important. These trifles make perfection and perfection is no trifle.

But behind and through all these studies there must be not vaguely but consciously the aim of the preacher, viz., to give God in Christ to men and to bring men to God. A recent writer said that "the aim of the Christian college should be threefold: It should put religion before scholarship without

minimising the latter, the college should be an instrument of service in the Kingdom, and teachers should be Christian men who accept their work as a trust from God."

Two other questions demand even a word: Since the hour has almost arrived when it will be possible to send candidates who are accepted for the Irish ministry immediately into College, and so obviate a method that has obtained of holding "intensive courses" for non-collegiate men, it is greatly to be desired that instead an annual "refresher course" should be established for all probationers and men, say, of ten years standing and under. The Committee that would oversee such a scheme would probably provide not only courses of lectures, but would introduce "the school" to the most important new books that ought to find a place on the young ministers' bookshelves and keep a plan of campaign for the following year steadily before those present. In this a spirit of enthusiasm, fellowship and mental stimulus would be provided for men sometimes in solitary outposts or in the equally monotonous toil of a great city.

The other question is a proposal made in some quarters to reduce the period of training on probation. It is thought that with a year, or even two, spent as lay evangelist, three years in College and four on probation a young man bears an unduly heavy burden in the matter of training. If such a proposal meant that men were to receive less rather than more training, it would not bear consideration. As such we do not interpret it. It is rather an attempt to place a premium on University education and in this manner: Candidates for the ministry who shall take an approved University degree before or during their years of training in College shall have their years of probation reduced, as the intellectual discipline acquired by probationary examinations is deemed to have been met by their University examinations. The training in circuit administration and public affairs could easily be accomplished in a year and at the utmost two. If we unite with this method the proposal made earlier in this chapter to enforce the matriculation standard on all candidates and make the College term four years, ministerial training may yet become more efficient and the time spent upon it be

lessened. By the time these lines are in print the Irish Methodist Conference will have the whole question under consideration, and we shall see what we shall see.

REFORM IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Finally it seems a certainty that the younger Methodists now growing up in our Church will demand changes in the form and manner of our public worship. This demand is arising from a more adequate conception of the nature of God, and of His relation to all good life. In earlier Methodism He was interpreted almost entirely in moral terms and His interest in men was made to cease once moral relations were established. This was true to the Nonconformist tradition, to Puritanism, to Paulinism and to Old Testament prophecy. On the whole, Methodism has been afraid of Greece, and of being too much at home among the good things of this world. As Mr. Malcolm Spencer says of the Puritan, the Methodist "is a man who is afraid of a sensuous and superficial reading of the universe. He is afraid of forfeiting the inward to the outward, afraid of losing God in the enjoyment of God's creation. His love of that which is beyond the world makes him distrust the manifold riches and colour of the world and fear the attempt to use them to the full. The attitude is essentially one of flight and of negation; a fear of enjoyment because of the seductions of enjoyment."

Even knowledge in religion is not always welcomed, on the ground that it is something less than divine, provides no dynamic and is not infrequently "puffed up." To-day in student communities especially, God is seen to be the Lord and giver of Truth and Beauty as well as of goodness; truth and beauty are the expression of His goodness. A new conscience has arisen on the duty of thinking accurately. A man is not recognised as a good Christian who ignores, much less suppresses, truth however unwelcome or difficult. This spirit, it is felt, gave us the tragedy of Calvary. There is, on the whole, a more honest and courageous spirit among the youth of this generation in its quest for reality than among many of their forbears.

The same is true concerning the appreciation of Beauty. Ugliness, whether in town-planning, on public hoardings, in church architecture or in our mode of conducting public worship, is seen to be a denial of certain elements in God. Ugliness is a form of blasphemy, it is man's refusal to admit God for what He is. Youth has seen this and calls upon our leaders to worship God in the beauty of holiness. What should be done in regard to church architecture, decoration schemes, choral and congregational singing, enriched responsive prayers, dignity without stodginess in conducting sacramental and other services, calls for attention. St. Paul undoubtedly shows scant interest in the wealth and beauty of this world. He even asks, "Doth God care for oxen?" But when we turn to Christ we see One to whom the universe is a revelation of Beauty, to whom lilies, vines and corn, the sparrow and the raven, the glowing dawn and glorious sunset all make appeal. Young Methodists seek leadership into all this fuller life in God, and nowhere can art become more effectively a means of grace than in public worship.

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